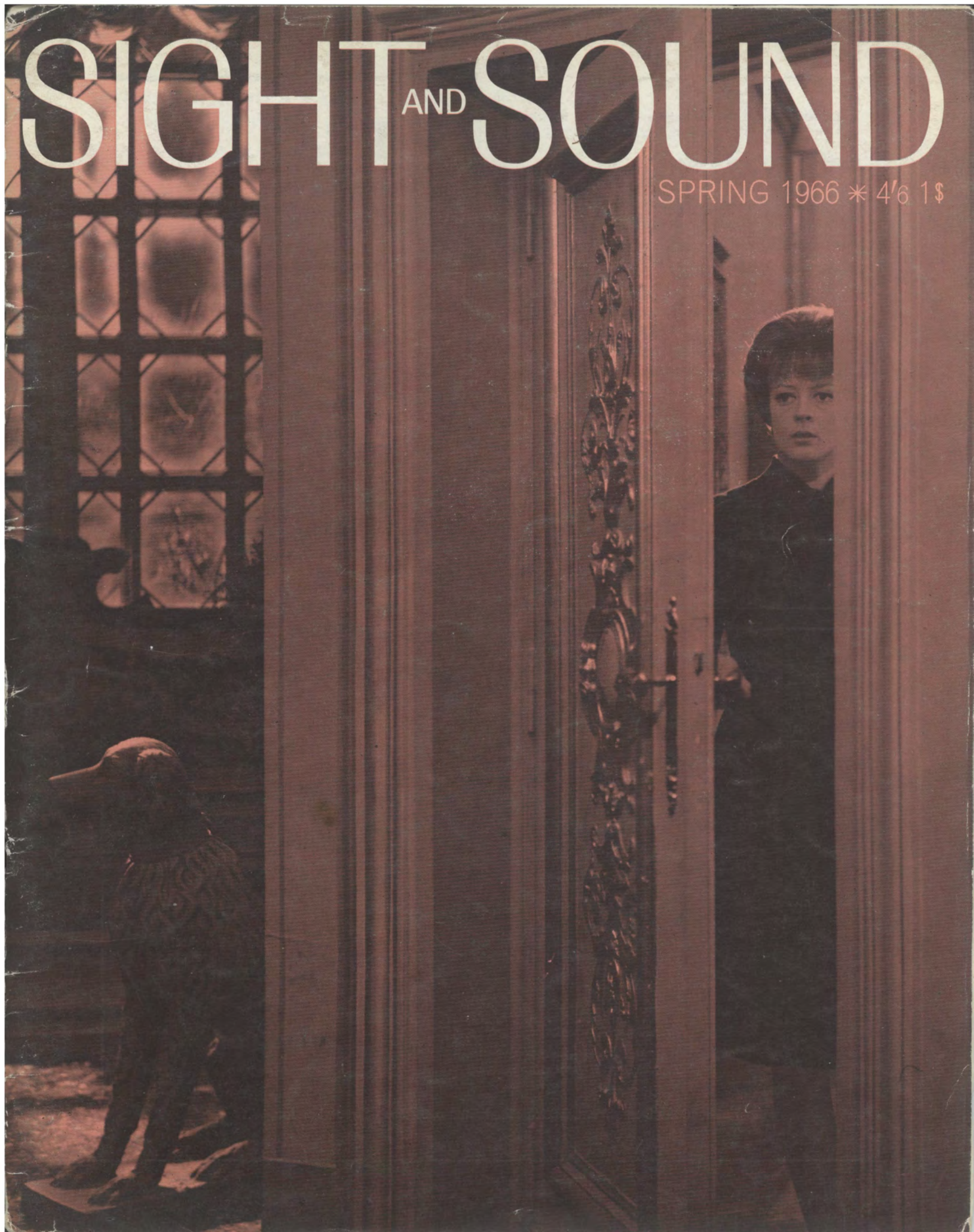




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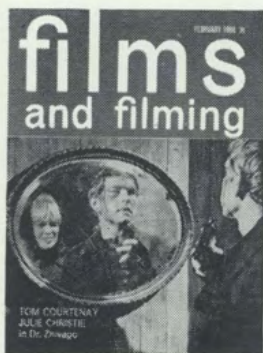
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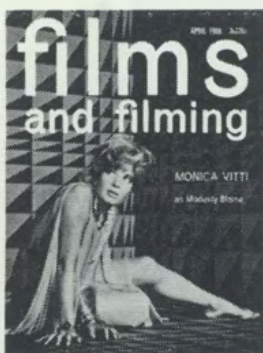
films and filming



IN THE FEBRUARY **films and filming** there are picture supplements of Dr. Zhivago, Flight of the Phoenix, Monkey on My Back, Life at the Top, Battle of the Bulge, Moment to Moment, Spy Who Came in From the Cold, Return from the Ashes, The Silencers, and Blindfold, plus illustrated reviews of current releases, colour cover of Tom Courtenay, Julie Christie in Dr. Zhivago, features on Tony Richardson, The Hero in Films, new Czech and Soviet films, Films that made Box Office impact in 1965, old films on television and much more of interest to film-lovers. The pictures are all hand-picked collectors' items.



IN THE MARCH **films and filming** there are picture supplements of Viva Maria!, Bunny Lake is Missing, Thomas the Imposter, The Love Cage, Alfie, Where the Spies Are, After the Fox, Les Pianos Mecaniques, Judith, Paris vu Par and Hotel Paradiso; John Mills on Directing My First Film; Olivia de Havilland writes on Lady in a Cage, the film the censor won't pass; The Tragic Hero by Kevin Gough Yates; The Loved One by Raymond Durnat, etc., etc.



IN THE APRIL **films and filming** James Stewart talks about some of his 70 films; there is a preview of some Nazi films you may see soon; Runaway heiresses—the day of the Hollywood heroine; an analysis of Joseph Losey's work; picture previews of Modesty Blaise, Anyone for Venice?, the new Madame X, Thomas the Imposteur and this year's Royal Film Born Free; illustrated reviews of the month's films and a guide to forthcoming premieres, releases and films to be shown on T.V.

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SIGHT^{AND}SOUND

THE INTERNATIONAL FILM QUARTERLY

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Anyone for Venice?

Editor: Penelope Houston Associate: Tom Milne
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E Penelope Houston **England,** *their* **england**

SOME WEEKS AGO, a French television unit came to London to do a story on the swinging British cinema. Among unlikely happenings, this one would seem to rate fairly high. French cinema swings; British cinema by French definition plods; and years of disparaging references to the studios "de sa Majesté" have kept us firmly in our place. And now, suddenly, times have changed. Truffaut is at Pinewood; Kubrick at Elstree; Chaplin at Pinewood; Joe Losey and Dick Lester are in the cutting-rooms with new pictures; Antonioni is scouting English locations. London looks disconcertingly like a world film-making capital. And if Truffaut comes, can the R.T.F. be far behind?

There isn't, as it happens, a British name on that list, unless we count Chaplin. But there are new British directors—like Joe McGrath, straight from television—working for American companies. What exactly has brought everyone to London? The American *Saturday Review* recently had a shot at an explanation, interviewing some of the London-based Americans and even discovering sentimental charms in their weekly games of softball in Hyde Park (softball: another American version of rounders?). Among the more obvious attractions: closeness to the Continent and the European festivals; availability of English actors; distance from the front office



LEFT: VITTI AND STAMP IN LOSEY'S "MODESTY BLAISE". ABOVE: PHIL SILVERS IN LESTER'S "A FUNNY THING HAPPENED . . ."

("Nobody saw one day's rushes on *Help!*" said its producer, Walter Shenson); greater authority for the director. "Happiness is a film-maker in London," the *Saturday Review* headed its story, in a moment of wild euphoria.

One suspects, however, that it is a shrewd and effective investment policy, rather than happiness or a mysterious something "in the foggy London atmosphere" that provides the answers. Ever since the exodus from Hollywood, American money has supported film-making all over Europe. A great deal of that money is now concentrated in London, partly, no doubt, because it's easier, closer, and offers the attractions of being abroad without the snags of having to work in a foreign language. M-G-M money backs Kubrick and Antonioni; MCA money backs Truffaut; Fox money backs Losey. British crews make the pictures, which means that they qualify for quota and Eady Money here; and once they get outside British territorial waters, as Lord Willis said in a recent House of Lords debate, they can always haul up the Stars and Stripes.

On the face of it, a very satisfactory situation all round. This is an industry where conditioned reflexes to ideas of American takeovers have to be instantly forgotten. The Americans are not driving the British out of work: they are creating employment. They are not setting out to Americanise British films:

they are using a good deal of British talent to develop an international cinema. They are not taking over a communications industry—one can imagine, indeed, the hullabaloo if Americans acquired a controlling interest in a newspaper or a TV company. They are simply coming here to make movies. They are not even, as some people seem to think, stealing the Eady Money out of the mouths of starving British film-makers: they are getting back a fair share on a big investment.

It is the size of the investment, less in terms of cash than of percentages, that looks intimidating. Andrew Filson, Director of the Federation of British Film Makers, said recently that 85 per cent. of British film-making in 1966 will be American financed. "Two thirds of the 69 feature length films made in England last year were 100 per cent. American financed"—a proportion which would be higher still if restricted to the big budget first feature. In other words, British film impresarios, far from being stimulated by the competition, as one feels someone like Korda would have been, are largely standing down; and British film-makers are choosing to get their money from American sources. A firm like Woodfall, Tony Richardson's jet-propelled company, has interests in British Lion; but its key films are made for United Artists.

This is not exactly surprising. American backing means

access to world markets; the chance of 100 per cent. finance, rather than having to go after "front" and "end" money like a man trying to assemble a pantomime horse; and possibly more generous (or realistic) attitudes to film budgets. Lord Birkett must have spoken for everyone when he said in the Lords debate that: "Until there is a solid and competitive alternative in British finance, film-makers in Britain would view with the greatest alarm anything which would deter the Americans . . ." Lord Archibald correctly stressed that what we ought to be worrying about is not American investment, but "the lack of British investment."

Everything is fine, in fact, unless and until the Americans move out. Then, it has been suggested (Lord Willis again), "the British film industry could collapse in a month." One can hardly imagine other industries accepting, with an equanimity amounting almost to cheerfulness, a situation in which 85 per cent. of production investment might at any moment choose to take itself elsewhere. And there is, of course, no guarantee of permanence, no tying investment in plant or fixed assets. This is mostly picture-by-picture finance, depending on such chancy things as the tastes of producers and directors, or the type of story in vogue at the moment (a spy boom brings film-makers to Europe; a Western boom could drive them home). Tugging against the present trend are the American unions and, indeed, the United States' own balance of payments problems.

What would happen in creative, let alone business, terms if the Americans should decide to hand our production industry back to us? It is very hard to say, because things can never again be just as they were: there can be no return to the situation of a few years ago, or the kind of English cinema that then seemed tentatively to be evolving. One wouldn't want to be too dogmatic about the importance in an industry like this of organic growth, as against the forced shoots thrown up by outside stimulus. (*What's New Pussycat?*, for instance, or *Darling*, sticks of hot-house asparagus after the English cabbage of *Some People or Billy Liar*.) But the French and Italian cinemas were on their own in the sense that matters and at the time it mattered: early Truffaut, Resnais, Godard, Olmi, Antonioni, weren't reckoning their budgets in dollars. The problem of what kind of direction a *British* British cinema might be taking is obscured by the difficulty of knowing just where to look for it.

* * *

To attract investment into film-making, and to attract British film-makers into getting finance from British sources: this is a conundrum that the N.F.F.C. has been trying to solve, with its admittedly quite inadequate resources. The other major source of assistance to British film-makers is of course Eady Money, this year running much closer than previously, thanks to James Bond, etc., to its recommended ceiling of £5 million a year. It's one of the finer ironies of a situation rich in improbable paradoxes that this scheme, so elaborately devised to help British film-makers, now acts as an extra incentive for the Americans. The American-backed *Goldfinger* and *Tom Jones* are reckoned to have drawn over a million dollars each from the Fund. (We, of course, do tend to calculate in dollars . . .) And *Variety* recently came up with the astonishing estimate of \$2,100,000 for *Thunderball*—or, roughly, 15 per cent. of the Fund's total annual revenue.

To them that have, most emphatically, shall be given: Eady Money is calculated on box-office returns. But this sort of figure is so remote from anything the original Eady Planners could have had in mind that it's hardly surprising there is pressure for some revision of terms. But revision to what end? Eady Money is not, after all, a government hand-out but a

form of self-help, originally accepted voluntarily by the industry and only later made statutory. It is fairly clear that the Government would be unlikely to consider any re-allocation of the money without some evidence of a demand within the industry. That such demands are not being made—or not from significant quarters—is thoroughly understandable. Any redistribution which might scare off American investment by reducing the size of the jackpot could be direly misguided. So could any change which simply meant that commercial success was helping to prop up inefficiency—that *Thunderball's* share, fairly earned, was being directed to unsuccessful pictures which it would be libellous to try to identify.

Still, we have Mr. John Davis's word for it that eighty per cent. of British films are losing money; and that is hardly a situation in which the industry can just sit tight and hope that nothing will happen to frighten the Americans away. Most European countries operate sets of elaborate subsidy systems. British policy—in intention, though not in fact—still tries to cling to Harold Wilson's dictum of 1948 that: "There must be no question of a subsidy for film production . . ."

Suddenly, however, we seem to be getting a subsidy, however small, for film *showing*: the Government are letting the British Film Institute commit itself to up to £50,000 capital expenditure in assisting the building of regional National Film Theatres. And if the dyke has once been fractionally dented in that direction, wouldn't it be equally feasible to let a little money through at the production end? The House of Lords debate stepped cautiously but shrewdly round some of these questions, even if *Hansard*, by showing some predilection for printing film as 'firm', made things look a little less rocky than they actually are. Why doesn't the Government take a look at Sweden, suggested Lord Willis, echoing a suggestion made in *SIGHT AND SOUND* a year ago, and making the only reference in the debate to our old theme of merit awards. Why doesn't it look at Denmark, one might now add. If a country with a population roughly half that of London can put nearly a million pounds a year into improving conditions for its film artists, the thing is clearly not impossible.

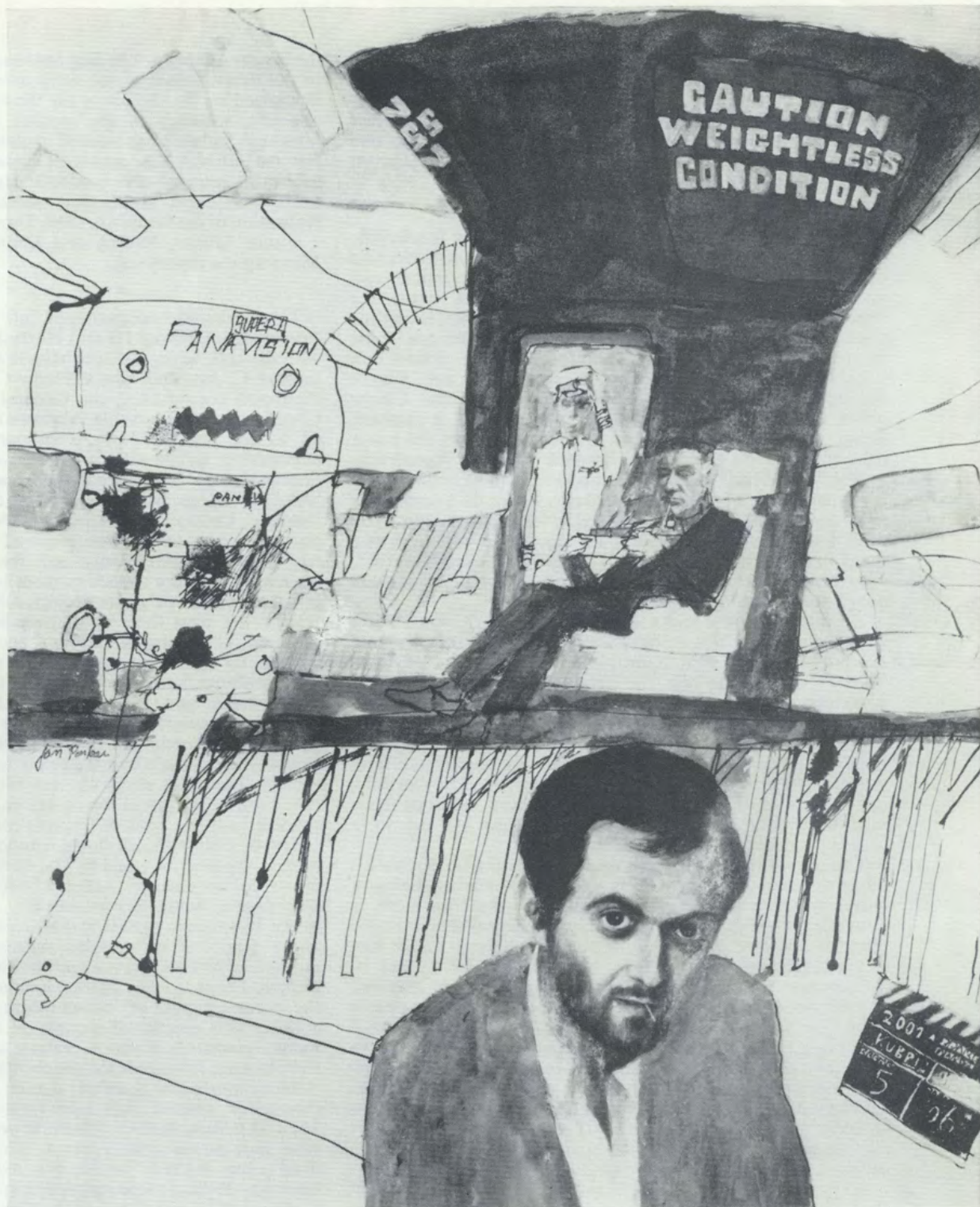
The Swedish and Danish funds, however, come out of entertainments tax; and no one here would be brutal or foolish enough to suggest burdening the industry with that again. A cautious and judicious re-allocation of a small share of the Eady Money is one answer; direct subsidy could be another. In any case, an awards scheme could run parallel to existing arrangements without doing them any damage. Its specific object would be to attract finance into the most speculative of all sectors of the industry—the 'quality' sector, however we might choose to define it. And if this is worth doing at all, it would need to be on a long-term basis, as a kind of long-stop insurance policy for the industry's creative future.

* * *

It sometimes seems that a kind of madness is needed to invest in British film production at all (*British* British films that is, as opposed to the American British variety), like someone at a roulette table obstinately and fatalistically backing zero on every spin. But, for all that, the wheel at the moment could conceivably be running our way. The films which Truffaut and Kubrick and Antonioni promise to make here are not by any means conventional: whatever 'quality' may be taken to mean in the cinema, it happens to be here now. The trick is to find some way of keeping it. If this is madness, then perhaps we ought to follow George II's precept, and hope that some of our investors and producers may get bitten. If not, there are always those examples of Swedish, Danish and Italian sanity to be studied.

Two for the sci-fi

David
Robinson



"2001" SKETCH BY JAN PARKER.

SCIENCE FICTION, NOW THAT it has moved out of the Gothick period of Forties pulp fiction (with the related spate of B-pictures and serials in the cinema), and into the space age, has become possibly the most consistently *philosophical* kind of popular literature there has ever been. As Edmund Crispin pointed out ten years ago, introducing Faber's first *Best SF*:

"... Science fiction is most certainly all ethics and politics and sociology, is indeed a sort of layman's textbook of vividly stated problems in these fields... Whether the author elects to make them explicit or not, the problems are constantly there, for the not very obscure reason that science fiction's subject-matter compels them to be there, whether we like it or not. Never before, in a popular entertainment literature, has anything at all resembling this serious and insistent overtone manifested itself; never before have frankly commercial magazines offered their readers stories of the

calibre of (James Blish's) *A Case of Conscience*, and still flourished in offering them. It is a phenomenon as astonishing in its own way as the imagination of the science fiction writers themselves..."

The philosophical implications of SF were bound to attract the more serious kind of film-maker; indeed SF could very well enjoy a revival in the cinema to become an important form in the late Sixties and the Seventies. As a sort of portent, two highly serious foreign film-makers—François Truffaut and Stanley Kubrick—are currently working in British studios on films that can broadly be classified as science fiction.

Broadly; because sci-fi covers a large field that must eventually be sub-classified. Sci-fi can be about the future or the present or even, on occasion, the past. It can be about men or machines or monsters; about technology or psychology or sociology; it can be realist or escapist; it can be horrific or speculative or admonitory. The inadequacy of a single classi-

fication is emphasised when it is used in relation both to Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* and Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451*. Apart from one coincidental and irrelevant detail (adhesive tape zippers as fastenings for futurist clothes) and the fact that they are both about a not too distant future, the two films have nothing in common. And neither, in the strictest sense, is science fiction.

* * *

The basis of Kubrick's *2001: A Space Odyssey* is scientific prediction, evolved with impeccable (even cautious) scientific deduction from projections of current astronomical and astronautical knowledge and practice. Kubrick wrote the screenplay in collaboration with Arthur C. Clarke, sometime Chairman of the British Interplanetary Society and one of the most successful and prolific writers of science fiction and science prediction. (More than twenty years ago Clarke described communications satellites.) Kubrick and Clarke began work about two years ago. Their method, it appears, was to do the story in novel form first. "We spent the better part of a year on the novel," Kubrick has been reported as saying. "We'd each do chapters and kick them back and forth. It seemed to me a better kind of attack. If you do a screenplay from an original story idea you tend to leave out the ideas you can't find a ready way of dramatising. But by doing it as a novel first you have a chance to really think everything out, after which you can figure out ways of dramatising what you now know are valuable points of the story."

No one—Kubrick and Clarke possibly apart—knows just what the story of *2001* is; or at least if they do know, they are not letting on. All that is certain is that it started off from Clarke's queer little tale *The Sentinel*, in which a party of spacemen exploring the moon come across a piece of highly technical scientific equipment evidently set in place centuries before. They slowly realise that it is in fact a kind of cosmic burglar alarm, designed to emit signals to some distant and unidentified planet if and when it is disturbed. The worrying implication of their discovery is that there has long been intelligent life in the universe quite apart from and unknown to man as they (and we) know him.

This anecdote is of course only a first premise for Kubrick's film. It is clear from the casting and from watching the work currently progressing in the studio that the film story is altogether more elaborate. But what the actual theme or the tone (*Strangelove* satire or sci-fi portentousness?) of the film will be remains quite secret. Kubrick himself cannot be approached by any means: several days on the set of *2001* and several weeks of harassing already harassed publicity people (who are not allowed to release a single production still) failed to get SIGHT AND SOUND close enough to Kubrick for so much as a civil good morning. In the end the publicity department handed out an offprint of a *New York Times Magazine* article published some weeks ago and for which Kubrick seems to have accorded an interview. (Perhaps it is not without significance that this particular article details the unhappy outcome of Terry Southern's visit to Kubrick on the *Strangelove* set. Kubrick invited Southern to collaborate on parts of the script; but was afterwards so incensed by the large credit given to the writer for his contributions that he threatened legal action against Martin Ransohoff in respect of advertisements describing Southern as "the writer of *Dr. Strangelove*." This article offers the nearest clues one has as to Kubrick's approach to the film; and any direct Kubrick quotations here are taken from it.)

One of Kubrick's comments on his film is, "What I'm after is a majestic visual experience." The extravagant, intense and meticulous effort that is going into the production of *2001: A Space Odyssey*, and specifically into the creation of a future period, recalls a Griffith super-production. (The title, for that matter, is almost a Griffith title.) As far back as last spring, Kubrick had brought together his technical advisers, some three dozen of them ("from twelve countries"). Even if some of these technical advisers turn out to be sci-fi magazine illustrators, the sheer manpower is still impressive. In addition, "more than forty top industrial and scientific concerns from the United States and Europe have supported the film with

design consultation. Leading aeronautical companies assisted in the development of the most advanced space vehicles yet developed on Earth, on or off the screen . . . To ensure the scientific accuracy of the motion picture, from the film's inception Kubrick has worked in close cooperation with many elements of N.A.S.A. and with leading American and British industrial, research and academic organisations." Among the firms who have given their services to assist Kubrick's realisation of the future are IBM, Dupont (who have developed a special fabric), Bausch and Lomb, Eastman Kodak and Minneapolis-Honeywell.

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Two scientific consultants of impressive credentials, Frederick I. Ordway III and Harry K. Lange (both formerly with the U.S. Army Ballistic Missile Agency and the N.A.S.A. George C. Marshall Space Flight Centre, and now running their own consultancy, the General Astronautical Research Corporation of Huntsville, Alabama), are permanently attached to the film. Ordway is primarily concerned with the engineering; Lange with the design; and they are a formidable double-act, all the time talking about 'instrumentation' and 'vehicles' (Lange, being of Germanic origin, actually calls them 'veagles'; Ordway is all-American and fast-talking). N.A.S.A. put its computers at their disposal to work out the actual trajectory to Jupiter (only now the film has been changed somewhat, and the trajectory must be reworked for Saturn). It is, I suppose, one's own projected fears that set a little apart from other men these new space scientists, cheerful, high-powered, combining intellectual activity with advanced and confidently optimistic philosophical notions.

Like science fiction itself, men like these cannot be frivolous; and all Lange and Ordway's designs for *2001* are rational and scientifically sound. They boast that every dial and indicator on the great instrument boards of their spacecraft would be necessary and would be scaled exactly as they are in a practical vehicle. They talk about the machines in realistic and functional terms. Clearly if the things do not actually take off for space it isn't the fault of Ordway and Lange.

The care for 'period' detail extends to the most peripheral things—clothes (designed by Hardy Amies), domestic arrangements, colour schemes. Actors cast in the future sequences are all chosen as being over six feet tall. Actors for a prologue set in the Pleistocene period had all to be less than five feet tall. Some details of set dressing suggest that the characteristic humour of *Strangelove* may not be altogether absent from this picture. The set for the waiting lounge of a space port parodies the arrangements of contemporary airports. A souvenir counter sells chunks of moonrock, dolls in space suits and picture postcards of moon craters; while a signboard points to "Howard Johnson's Earthlight Room."

More impressive than the details are the mass of the sets themselves, spectacularly monopolising most of the stages at M-G-M Elstree Studios. (The prehistoric and moon sequences were shot earlier at Shepperton, where 90 tons of sand were dyed what seemed, before the real-life moon landing of February 1966, a more suitable colour.) The space lounge set is almost 150 feet long; and the floor is constructed in an arc which gives strange, giddy effects if you attempt to walk up or down it. There are moon-stations and spacecraft of equally daunting scale. The most staggering set constructed for the film is, however, the great centrifuge, designed and built for the film by Vickers Armstrong. It looks rather like a fair-ground big wheel of exceptional bulk, heavily studded with arc lights and back projection devices and festooned with swags of cable. The wheel itself stands thirty-six feet high—half as tall again, roughly, as the rooftop of a reasonably-sized two-storey house. The working area of the set is the inner part of the wheel or drum, which can be rotated in either direction at a pretty fair pace. This operation is quite alarming. Movement is at all times heralded by a warning hooter of eerie pitch and piercing volume; and the wheel picks up speed with disconcerting muted creaks and grunts. Clearly it could be dangerous; and to add to the menace of the thing, the technicians who work inside it wear heavy crash helmets. The actors are not so protected.



"FAHRENHEIT 451": TRUFFAUT WITH JULIE CHRISTIE (AS LINDA MONTAG) AND OSKAR WERNER.

Kubrick at work on his stages has rather the air of a David embattled with several Goliaths, or, perhaps, Quixote tilting at the windmills. Sometimes the machines seem to be getting the upper hand. Shooting was entirely held up for nearly a fortnight because the centrifuge, it seemed, simply *would* not be finished. But if Kubrick seems to be battling with his machinery, it is at least a contest of his own setting-up; and probably one that excites and extends him.

* * *

Kubrick, currently wearing a beard, looks rather like Orson Welles playing a short man, or else like Buñuel's younger brother. On the set he is quiet, severe, giving an impression of being rather forbearing than actually patient (which is his reputation) and keeping himself, for the most part, to himself. It seems no accident that he has an assistant director of N.C.O. firmness. The *New York Times Magazine* made great play of the "awe" in which his collaborators hold him; and you feel that this is the sort of relationship that he encourages. Only occasional small jokes break the intensity of his concentration and suggest that his work actually gives him pleasure. In between attending to everything else, he is forever snatching up a polaroid camera and snapping off photographs, some apparently for immediate reference, but others, it seems, simply as stills.

His attention to detail is legendary, and extends from close control over every technical aspect to minute observations of the actors' presence and performance. A scene with William Sylvester, already meticulously set up and rehearsed, was reshot several times because Kubrick was not happy with the way the moisture in the corner of the actor's eye glistened; and then again reshot because Kubrick felt that Sylvester gave an inflection that was vaguely British to a line of very little importance.

Actors speak highly of Kubrick, and there is no doubt that their performances may often owe much to his care for detail in directing them. It must also be fairly gruelling at times. Another scene I watched required a supporting player to

address a scientific congress. The lines set down for him were already trying enough:

"In this stressful environment for Hal, we suspect that your threat of disconnection might have been the proverbial last straw. Hal had not known unconsciousness since his operational acceptance. This might have seemed for him the equivalent of death as we know it. . ."

Constant reiteration under Kubrick's fierce eye rapidly reduced the actor to a terrible series of fluffed deliveries, not helped by Kubrick's progressive revisions of the lines during rehearsals, or by his rather unconvincing reassurances. ("Cut it . . . Pretty nice though . . . Now you're doing sump'n funny with your eyes . . . Now you're getting a bit public speakerish . . . Now you sound a little sad . . . Wanna try it again? . . . You sound like you're reading a eulogy. Very sombre. Just keep it factual, casual . . . Just try it once more without the camera . . .")

Kubrick in fact appears to be happiest when he is faced with a direct technical challenge; and *2001* provides him with several. As one instance, the space suits devised for Keir Dullea and Gary Lockwood have to have their own air supply; and when the actors are in them, only Kubrick can communicate with them through two-way transmitters fixed in the suits. Despite the immediate difficulties, Kubrick looks appreciably gayer directing on the centrifuge stage, imposing as it does quite exceptional working conditions. There is only room for the actors and the camera inside the set, so the director and the main technical unit must sit inside a sort of cage at some distance from the set, watching on the monitor of a closed-circuit television system, transmitting from a camera in parallel with the film camera, and communicating with the actors and cameraman by microphones and headsets.

The day I watched Kubrick on this set he was shooting a scene in which Gary Lockwood was doing track exercises around the inside rim of the centrifuge. The set-up required that as the wheel moved round, Lockwood ran in the opposite direction so as to maintain his position on one spot; while the camera was moved so as also to keep in position a little ahead

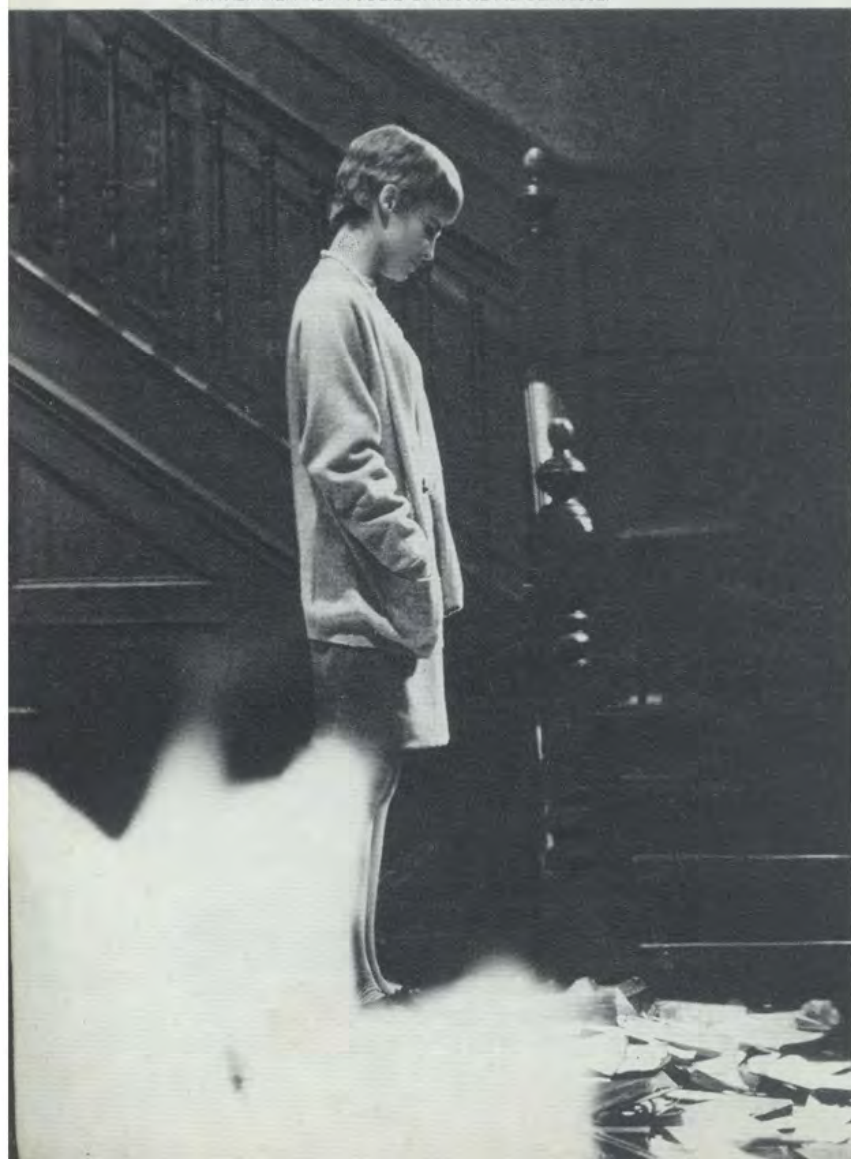
of him. Since the camera was shooting on its side, the effect was that the camera was tracking back around a (comparatively speaking) stationary centrifuge, to show Lockwood running around the *side*, holding to the floor by the centrifugal force of the vehicle's movement in space. The effect, heightened by the strains of a Chopin waltz (shades of *Strangelove*) played by Kubrick on a small portable player, was unexpectedly comic on the screen. Kubrick was evidently fascinated by the prospects of editing this material and seeing the effects of conventional reverse cutting with such a set-up.

* * *

There is none of the mystery of *2001* about François Truffaut's *Fahrenheit 451*. This is adapted faithfully in spirit, if not altogether to the letter, from Ray Bradbury's horrific short novel which has as its motto a quotation from Juan Ramon Jimenez: "If they give you ruled paper, write the other way." The extreme horror of the story is that the predicated world of the near future seems at first unthinkable beastly: then you begin to recognise that the factors and elements that make it up all exist already—a society in which books, as they become more available, are less read; in which affluence becomes an end in itself; in which feelings on the one hand, intellect on the other, become suspect; in which the media of mass communication are used as an opiate instead of a stimulus. And the burning of books, the attempt at suppression of nonconformist ideas by physical means, is as old as paper. (451° Fahrenheit is, for the record, the combustion point of paper.)

In this world, where houses are quite non-flammable, firemen no longer extinguish fires but light them, burning books wherever they may be found. The hero of *Fahrenheit 451*, Guy Montag, is a fireman who becomes infected with old-fashioned humanist, cultural, intellectual ideas caught in part from books

"FAHRENHEIT 451": JULIE CHRISTIE AS CLARISSE.



he has stolen out of curiosity and in part from contact with Clarisse, a young girl of nonconformist tendencies. Betrayed by his conformist and uncomprehending wife, he runs away from the city into a sort of no-man's land where he finds a race of men who are endeavouring to keep the old cultures alive by committing books to memory and passing them on from generation to generation. It is in fact a rather pessimistic sociological and cultural prediction. Again, 'science fiction' is too imprecise a classification.

Truffaut has said of his film: "Most science fiction is rather like fairy tales for adults. In this sense, *Fahrenheit 451* might be seen as a fable set in the electronic age. There are two kinds of science fiction. The first is about 'earth people' and the second deals with extra-terrestrial beings, e.g. martians, moon people, robots, monsters and the like. *Fahrenheit 451* belongs to the first category: it takes place in the world as we know it, but with a slight anticipation in time . . .

"Inasmuch as the setting is anonymous and the nationality of the characters is not defined, the film is a fantasy. Yet, within this fantasy, there are strong elements of reality. It is not unlike a story of the French Resistance—except that here the men on the run are book lovers. In fact a concurrent theme of the picture is the love of books. For some people this is on an intellectual level. They value a book for its contents. For others it is a sentimental attachment to a book as an object. This might apply to a man who spent his childhood in the backwoods where books were rare; or a form of nostalgia associated with a book that was a birthday honour or a school prize. Here, quite apart from its contents, the book becomes a cherished object and with the passage of time, even the binding, the cover, or the smell of leather will acquire a very special meaning to the owner.

"The fact that book burning has prevailed throughout the history of mankind and that even today restrictions are being imposed on reading matter in various parts of the world, lends a strong element of reality to *Fahrenheit 451* . . ."

* * *

"If I err," says Truffaut, "it will be on the side of too great realism" (which is hardly, in the context of the novel, an error at all). One basic move away from reality—dictated perhaps by discretion in the case of a film made in England by an American company with a French director and an Austrian star (Oskar Werner)—is that while Bradbury's novel was set in a recognisable America, Truffaut's film has no identifiable geographical or political location.

On the whole Truffaut has simplified the story. The old professor who is an important character in the novel is cut out altogether, and his rather artificial role of mentor to Montag has been given to Clarisse, the girl, whose character in consequence has been built up considerably. (In the film we shall see her return to the school where she had taught, and the horror she strikes in the children indoctrinated with a terror of the anti-conformist.)

With his own ends in view, no doubt, Truffaut has introduced what look like conventional elements into the story. The sexual side of Montag's relationship with his wife has been somewhat filled out. The ending in Truffaut's adaptation will be more cheerful, if not actually more optimistic than Bradbury's. Bradbury has Clarisse vanish for good within the first fifty pages of the book, and ends with Montag witnessing the atomic annihilation of the City from across the river. Truffaut, it appears, will spare both Clarisse and the City.

As a general rule science fiction is regrettably light on humour. "Humorous or satirical science fiction" (to quote Edmund Crispin once more) "nearly always curdles into facetiousness—so that the phrase 'a humorous science fiction story' is in itself a sort of definition of misplaced jocularity—for the very good reason that awe and laughter are to all intents and purposes wholly incompatible." Ray Bradbury himself is, to an extent, an exception to this rule; but it is easily predictable that Truffaut's own distinctive and generous humour will enrich this fable. His script contains some potentially very funny (if also chilling) scenes of the television entertainment of the near future.

In terms of production the contrast between Truffaut's and

Kubrick's films is striking. Most of *Fahrenheit 451* will be shot on a single small set representing the Montags' flat, with hall, parlour, bedroom, kitchen and bathroom. (But Truffaut is already getting worried about working so much in the studio. It is, he feels, too easy and a bad discipline. His next film, he says, must be all location work, as was *Les quatre cents coups*.) Exteriors will mostly be shot on location in London and Paris; a tunnel at Pinewood will represent the firehouse exterior. The only elaborate effects work required will be for the burning down of a house or two. Otherwise the real process of creation will all take place in the relationship between Truffaut, his camera and his actors.

* * *

The actors in this case are (principally) Oskar Werner as Montag, Cyril Cusack as the Fire Chief, and Julie Christie in the dual role of Clarisse and Montag's wife Linda (Mildred in the book). Truffaut jokes that this was the idea of the producer (Lewis Allen); but in fact he is rather fascinated by the exercise of using the actress in a split Jekyll-and-Hyde role.

Truffaut is fascinating to watch at work, even when he is doing the most routine bread-and-butter scenes, simply because he betrays, as few other directors do, an entirely fresh, unhampered pleasure in his work. He is a child playing with an ever-new toy. He is completely relaxed and at his ease. If Kubrick is exceptionally unattainable when he is engaged on a film, Truffaut must be the most approachable of directors. He is quite happy to chat and to join in the larking about between shots that seems characteristic of film technicians all the world over. (It is, one supposes, as much a reaction from the tension of actual shooting as a reflection of the boredom of the long waiting periods that practically everyone on a film set has to suffer.) He enjoys the language jokes which are mainly at his own expense: his cry of "Curt!" when a scene is in the can is now a byword at Pinewood (where Truffaut's neighbour is Chaplin, whose work on *A Countess from Hong Kong* is only a shade more secretive than Kubrick's on *2001*).

Truffaut's sense of pleasure and his absorption in the work appears to be communicated to the whole unit; and since he does not stand upon any exceptional rights of autocracy as a director, everyone's suggestions and contributions are accepted and valued. Oskar Werner, for instance, will freely offer his suggestions on his own and on other actors' performances. "The trouble with this film," said one rather stick-in-the-mud old technician, "is that there are too many damn' directors." You feel, though, that for all the cooperative method, there is eventually only one.

Truffaut, again in contrast to Kubrick (who interestingly enough is quoted as putting Truffaut at the head of his *second* division directors; his rather curious first choices are Fellini, Bergman and David Lean), does not seem to be over concerned with detail. His eye is on the general effect. Predictably there is none of Kubrick's precise adherence to the written script; actors change the words from take to take without anyone worrying overmuch. This approach, added to Truffaut's splendid assurance when he is behind the camera, makes it possible to secure shots of considerable geographical elaboration with a very moderate number of takes.

One shot I saw him do involved taking the camera through six distinct areas of the small set in order to record a continuing action. The scene was the one near the beginning of the book where two male nurses come to clean out Mrs. Montag's system after she has taken an overdose of drugs. The camera, sited in the parlour, observes Montag in the hall, letting the nurses into the front door. It then follows them through the hall and into the bedroom, where they begin their operation; then rests on Montag, tracks back in front of him as he goes from the bedroom through the bathroom, into the hall and thence into the kitchen; at first keeping the bedroom and the nurses in the background, finally settling into a medium shot of Montag sitting on a stool in the kitchen. The first take or two was interrupted by technical hitches (the camera crashed into a door frame, for instance) or by actors' fluffing; but at the second or third completed take Truffaut had his shot and was already improvising an additional shot to vary the sequence.

Generally speaking Truffaut seems quite unhandicapped by

his minimal command of English. His personal assistant and translator (she is currently working on his Hitchcock book), Helen Scott, is happily bilingual; and the French and English continuity girls, Suzanne Schiffman and Kay Mander, have also each a fair command of the other's language. In any case, Truffaut and the technicians seem instinctively to understand one another. Truffaut has no official assistance with the dialogue direction. Oskar Werner, with firm ideas about the autocracy of the actor ("the director is, after all, a newcomer to the theatre"), is positively indignant at the very suggestion that such assistance might be thought useful.

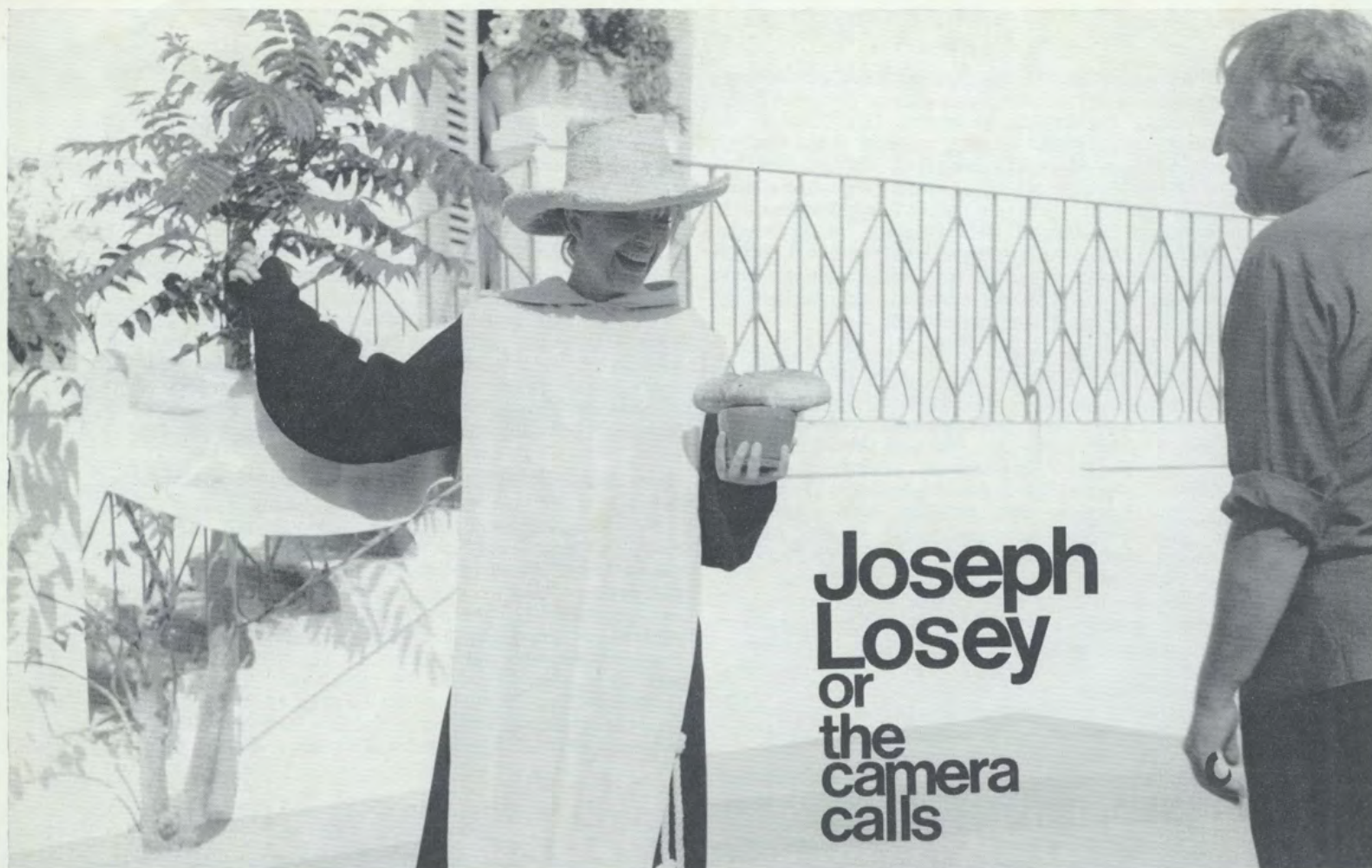
Truffaut, like most foreign directors working for the first time in this country, expresses great admiration of British film technicians; though he is even more impressed with the Elemach crab dolly, which, though an Italian product, was unknown to him before he came to Britain, and opens up whole new possibilities for work with a mobile camera.

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As a postscript I should perhaps point out that though my professional life is mostly spent in watching finished films, I very infrequently have the opportunity to see them being made. This may at least give a certain merit of naivete to my observation of directors at work. And what struck me above all in seeing these two films in production is how consistent seem to be their directors' working personalities with the personalities expressed in their films. Kubrick as working man remains as reserved and enigmatic as the body of work which veers from *Paths of Glory* to *Spartacus*; from *Lolita* to *Strangelove*. And in Truffaut the director, as in the films, you are aware of an exhilaration in the very business of creation. You know that Truffaut's film will be, whatever else, exciting. You hope Kubrick's will be.

BEE DUFFELL AS THE WOMAN WHO SETS FIRE TO A PILE OF BOOKS, AND BURNS HERSELF UP WITH THEM. (TRUFFAUT, CHARACTERISTICALLY, TOPPED THE PILE WITH A COPY OF "CAHIERS DU CINEMA".)





Joseph Losey or the camera calls

Gilles Jacob

EVERYONE WOULD NOW AGREE that Losey has hoisted himself up there at the top as a director, but there still remains the more delicate question of his status as an *auteur*: not everything in his work militates in favour of consecration. If it is true that, fundamentally, a Losey film traces the passage of a character from darkness to light, the same image might be applied to his own career, built over twenty years upon a series of experiments constantly re-directed towards a more precise understanding of his art. In this respect the prime Losey hero is Losey himself, who seems destined to be remembered less for his mutilated body of work—a sort of dress rehearsal for an ideal film which never materialises—than for his intellectual journeying in search of a style.

But these continually renewed reflections on *mise en scène* do not lead to a simple solution. The example of *Eva*—Losey's greatest mistake*—and of the last third of *The Servant*, show that by indulging ornamentation in the name of beauty, and by submitting to the mannerisms which nag away inside him, Losey can coin a tinselly counterfeit to mar his collection of genuine gold. The concise, shock-cutting style of his American period has given way to a convulsive baroque; his characters seem to exert a strange fascination over him, part horror and part bewitchment, and his pulse quickens when faced by the chemical reactions produced by mixing them; he isn't always too successful in shaking off the slightly precious elegance which stalks his work. But perhaps his apocalyptic vision of

the quicksands of decay will never be better expressed than by these baroque ripples and arabesques. One must accept Losey as he is, dry violence alternating with flowery extravagance, and incapable of dodging the pitfalls opened up for him by schematism and symbolism.

In addition to his stylistic excesses, Losey is inclined to overload his films with symbolic meanings. Some, more analogy than symbol, are acceptable, like the trial of the rat in *King and Country*, which underlines the mockery of the whole affair. Others are completely satisfactory, like the correspondence drawn between the contaminated children and the motor-cycle gang in *The Damned*. The gang's black leather jackets are as cold as the skins of the children, and to crown the analogy, the leader of the gang is shut away with the radioactive children, so becoming a mutant twice over. But what is one to make of the clumsy plastering of symbolism in *Eva*, where the couple can't find themselves on a bed without eliciting the crudely obvious sexual symbolism of a fountain? Or those frequent compositions—the mark of a frustrated painter—where a stiff dose of expressionism turns counterpoint into redundancy? No doubt Losey is trying to clarify what he is saying; but the sort of distrust of an audience's capacity for understanding which makes a Richard Brooks repeat everything several times over is more surprising coming from someone with such pronounced faith in mankind.

I have two further reservations. Curiously, the result of this rich, paroxysmal ferment is a sort of abstraction, a laboratory chill in the construction of the characters. Because they have been carefully and patiently cultivated in the test-tube, they lack the freedom of life, that tiny seed of incalculability which

*In fairness to Losey, we ought perhaps to point out that this criticism is based on the cut and redubbed version of the film—the only one previously available, which Losey himself dislikes. The more complete version has only been shown during the last few weeks at the National Film Theatre.—*Editor*.

ABOVE: "MODESTY BLAISE". MONICA VITTI WITH JOSEPH LOSEY.



"BLIND DATE", THE GIRL'S FLAT AS INSPECTED FIRST BY JAN (HARDY KRUGER), THEN BY THE POLICEMAN (STANLEY BAKER).



counterbalances the stereotyped reactions conjured up more by a mental process than by any real emotion. Basically, the art of Losey—the awakening conscience of intelligence—is addressed to the mind rather than the heart.

But Losey's real problem is that he has nothing much to say, nothing original at least, and has been content to work for the most part on subjects of some banality. No one is likely to complain when his multi-faceted style is applied to a script-writer of the calibre of Harold Pinter, but one does jib when he heaps his films with pseudo-philosophical ideas borrowed from psychopathology and half-digested Freud, or existential messages whose ambiguity can mean either everything or nothing, and which, sprinkled with biblical references of universal significance, mean that each film can be labelled as fable, parable or morality. The fault probably lies in the fact that a sense of humour is not Losey's strong point; and while some directors treat solemn subjects lightly, or light subjects solemnly, he treats solemn subjects solemnly. But Losey's eye is, first and foremost, that of an entomologist trained on a chaotic world, and his work would be seriously diminished by any attempt to define it in terms of *film à thèse*, social conscience and message: he is more than just a Cayatte made good.

* * *

The misunderstanding probably arises because Losey's work looks at first glance like a confrontation of social problems, and on this level his style is limpid, his message clear. In almost all his films one can trace the progress of a fight against outmoded systems, an attack on the concrete jungle of a society whose laws man must accept or die. If there is a high percentage of artists among Losey's characters, it is because art is one of the last ditches from which one can still challenge man's exploitation of man, the degradation of the individual, and the moments and causes of this destruction. Even more than racialism (*The Dividing Line*), capital punishment (*Time Without Pity*), false accusation (*Blind Date*), the world of imprisonment (*The Criminal*), atomic anguish (*The Damned*), the horrors of war (*King and Country*), alienation and degradation (*The Gypsy and the Gentleman*, *Eva*, *The Servant*), even more than all of this it is the concept of justice which sticks like a fishbone in Losey's gullet and makes him cry out against the structure of a society where to act means to align oneself with injustice.

To transform this cry into images, Losey has found correspondences of a very different order from his crude symbolism. He can achieve the rare heights of passion, clumsily but with fine sincerity in *The Dividing Line*, and even lyricism, as at the end of *The Damned*, when the helicopter circles tirelessly over the boat in which the two lovers await their death from radioactive contamination. When Losey feels deeply about something, his imagery can be so tangibly exact that all one's critical severity, and the demands one makes of him, are justified. Racialism becomes incarnate in stone, imprisonment in cement, degradation and decay in mud; and above all, the crumbling uncertainties of life in the atomic age, the decalcification of contaminated flesh and bone, is brilliantly translated by the chalky cliffs of *The Damned*.

As a director who prizes awareness, it is important for Losey that a film should not simply be a show to take the spectator out of himself, but a goad to prick his consciousness of the problems which surround him. For this a certain perspective is necessary, a distanciation to prevent identification with the story or characters, a *malaise* to sharpen awareness. Losey acts, and watches himself in action, and his films are at one and the same time a crisis of conscience and a consciousness of crisis. When he is in complete control, they contain images and sequences which seem to grow and unfold, questioning and challenging, before our eyes. And his unflinching, honest

lucidity is grounded, almost paradoxically, both on a premonitory vision of a world crumbling in the ruins of its own responsibility, and on an unshakeable faith in human nature, no matter how eagerly it races to its own destruction. This is why one can speak of Losey's optimism, an optimism which surmounts his stabbing fear of the Apocalypse and the inventions of man which have prepared its way. The stronger the smell of sulphur, the more commanding his lucidity, the nobler his cry.

But the social question is only one key among many locks. As important is Losey's charting of the human heart, his increasing understanding of the actor, his precision of gesture and expression, his mastery of decor, framing, angle, lighting, and the line and property of objects. Out of this control a style is born—the way Losey looks at the world—which draws its strength from a particular way of looking at characters within or against their surroundings. What interests Losey is not so much actions as reactions: the reverberations set up by an action in a character and his milieu. So the sudden blaze of race hatred and the wrecking of the newspaper office in *The Dividing Line* breed Sunny's nascent love for the Larry who is doing his best to use his influence on behalf of the Mexican boy. Like a jewelled pivot set among the gear-wheels of a watch, the mechanism interlocks the characters: a movement by one immediately sets the other in motion, either in sympathy or in opposition. The reactions are so tangled and interdependent that it is difficult to know whether to admire more the single harmonious movement of the whole or the perfect finish of each component.

* * *

The art of Losey lies in the strength of a narrative which is not tied to events, in the refusal (very modern, this) to allow himself to be trapped by the story in revealing the essence of the characters and their destiny. The absolute necessity of each movement of the camera, whose choice implies a clearly sighted goal, serves as a basis for an exact reconstruction of reality—a reconstruction defined in *The Criminal* by the unexpected and insistent presence of a piano-tuner at work in a crook's apartment, suggesting by his dissonances that, basically, this recreated world differs from our own only in being a tone higher or lower. But in observing man, Losey is trying to seize not only his look, but his body, his movements, presence and bearing, a whole anthology of tiny, significant facts and gestures.

Securely lodged away in the mind, one can discover the memory of a man sobbing (*The Prowler*, *Time Without Pity*), the trotting flight of the child-murderer (*M*), a tramp letting his arms fall to his side (*Stranger on the Prowl*), the heavy tread and carnivorous sneer of an industrialist-murderer (*Time Without Pity*), the young painter in love stopping dead on one foot (*Blind Date*), a gangster tanning himself under a sun-lamp to remove his prison pallor (*The Criminal*), an angry man finding release in hurling a dart squarely at the bull (*Time Without Pity*), a gypsy's leg snaking like a serpent from behind the chair where she is hidden (*The Gypsy and the Gentleman*), the sudden shiver in her lover's arms which betrays the murderess (*Blind Date*), a woman kicking off her shoes to get a better purchase on her drunken companion (*Eva*), a warder rattling his keys on the staircase over the noise made by prisoners beating their plates (*The Criminal*).

This point of view, which aims more at the ontological than the dramatic in portraying a human being, works through the psychology of behaviour, a subtle art of appearances where only the gesture counts. Losey's camera seizes the actor in his most intimate attitudes, clinging close to imprison him in an invisible web of tentacles which imperceptibly strip away the mask. And, as if to demonstrate that his work draws its

strength from an ensemble of personal obsessions and observations, gestures or perceptions make their reappearance from time to time, conjured up by another turn of the kaleidoscope in which life is viewed as through a distorting prism.

The density of Losey's style is a result of his constant, questing evolution, and it is possible to find in the early films the premises for the extremely concentrated style he has now evolved. The best scene in *The Big Night*, for instance, is the long *plan-séquence* in which Georgie meets Marion for the first time, where the camera's constant, hesitant re-framing suggests the clumsy excitement of a first love.

The early "clenched fist" style can still be found in occasional sharp cuts and deliberately brutal transitions, but the ellipses have given way to long, sinuously fluid takes (usually *plans-séquences*) where a caressing camera sweeps both characters and settings up in an undulating, curving, circular movement, facilitating reflections and transpositions. Having brought the visual balance of his sequences to a perfection which can lead to either dross (*Eva*) or gold (*The Servant*), and aware that his work has a unity in that it is built upon a very delicate but very firm network of labyrinthine camera movements which welds all the elements in the canvas together, Losey is able to devote himself to those instants of discovery with an actor, where, as with Resnais, one feels the cinema to be in a process of evolution. The scientist releases the actor in a retort, confronts him with his protagonists, and screws the tension to maximum pressure in order to exact everything he possesses. In his most successful films—despite the abstract element I mentioned—the moves and counter-moves of pawns on a chessboard, in which the position of each alters in accordance with the advantages and alliances it gains, do allow Losey to produce characters whom he moulds by hand, just as Freya, the sculptress of *The Damned*, moulds her clay. And there emerge, gradually, beings in whom one believes.

* * *

This is due primarily to the fact that Losey establishes them in a setting which emerges as a character in its own right, and very often as a leading player. The city is a physical presence, whether the Los Angeles of *M* or *The Big Night*, or the London of *Time Without Pity* or *Blind Date*; and even more, apartments are completely individual characters, having their own existence and a major part to play in the life of the film. Joseph Losey, or The Camera Calls. Each of his films comprises the exploration of at least one apartment, by way of letting us get to know the occupant. (It may also take the form of an analysis of a statue, the War Memorial in *King and Country*, the earthly paradise carved on a Venetian palace in *Eva*.) Losey deciphers an apartment just as one deciphers a human soul, but with such skill that one can sometimes even sense the state of mind of the visitor. In *Blind Date*, for instance, the girl's flat is visited first of all by Jan, amorously; then recorded with a meticulous professional detachment by Inspector Morgan. The process here is particularly interesting as the girl is dead, and our only knowledge of her comes from the spiritual portrait gradually revealed by the apartment. One can apply a key to these settings: Jan's studio means the love of Jan and Jacqueline, Morgan's office means the pursuit of truth; in *Eva* (a film especially rich in camera visits), the streets and canals of Venice mean the love of Tyvian and Eva.

In *The Servant*, the visual correspondences become even more subtle. The empty house of the beginning undergoes a gradual metamorphosis, in furnishings, walls, flower arrangements, evolving in sympathy with its tenants as Tony is dominated in turn by Susan or Barrett, until it finally communicates the moral defeat of a young man overwhelmed by the weight of his inheritance. As early as *The Big Night* one can find correspondences between human beings and their surroundings: shabby apartments where the beds groan under



"THE SERVANT": JAMES FOX AND DIRK BOGARDE.

the accumulated weight of years of fatigue, trunks turned on end serve as stands for rickety lamps, and the flowery wall-paper looks none too clean, all set against neat interiors flaunting their bronzes, ornaments, miniatures, chandeliers, in execrable taste but loudly signalling the presence of a woman: a very fair moral portrait of a world seen from the inside.

As a further reinforcement of this visual equation, Losey, almost alone except for Wyler among contemporary directors, makes brilliant use of varying levels. A Losey film, in fact, looks rather like a contour map drawn up on scale paper. This is particularly noticeable in *The Damned*, where the minus 10 level means the children living in their prison under the cliff; zero is sea level, the beach at Weymouth, the atomic scientists' control-room, the little town besieged by the motor-cycle gang; and the plus 50 level is the cliff-top where Freya vainly erects tortured sculptures which seem already ravaged by radiation sickness and death. The courtmartial room in *King and Country* is similarly levelled, though in a much less pronounced way. This sort of geodesic stratification may perhaps seem a little artificial, but its use isn't always so elementary. In *The Servant*, the emphasis given to angles and staircases should be seen not so much as a strategic advantage or disadvantage given to a particular character, as a latent symbolism of the complex moral ascendancies and sub-missions which work as interdependently as the water-levels in a chain of canal locks. This is why the role of Barrett's pseudo-sister, planet of a subtly complex system, remains ambiguous to the end. Is she an instrument in Barrett's hands, helping him to enslave Tony? Or is she pulling the strings? Or is she merely an alibi in a predominantly homosexual establishment, where Losey has foreseen all the possible combinations? Tony-Barrett, Tony-Vera, Barrett-Vera, Tony-Susan, Barrett-Susan. (There remains only Vera-Susan, but in the restaurant scene Losey is at pains to include a pair of bizarre couples—two priests and two Lesbians.) Even in the final party sequence, Vera retains her mystery by failing to make an appearance.

* * *

But who are these characters in flux, seized in mid-flight in the moment of metamorphosis? How is Losey's world



ABOVE: CLASSROOM OF THE RADIO-ACTIVE CHILDREN IN "THE DAMNED" (ALEXANDER KNOX ON THE TELEVISION SCREEN).

LEFT: NORTH ITALIAN LOCATION IN "EVA".

BELOW: VIOLENCE ON THE MUD-FLATS IN "THE MAN ON THE BEACH". MICHAEL RIPPER AND MICHAEL MEDWIN.



peopled? It is chiefly a world of men whose occupation (artists, the liberal professions, etc.) implies intellectual qualities. For the most part they are at a loose end, and are socially unintegrated: the weary journalist who wants to put down roots (*The Dividing Line*), the crooked cop (*The Prowler*), the teenager ignorant of his father's past (*The Big Night*), the tramp who becomes a small boy's protector (*Stranger on the Prowl*), the psychiatrist whose wife falls in love with his patient (*The Sleeping Tiger*), the blind doctor (*Man on the Beach*), the producer who receives compromising letters (*Intimate Stranger*), the alcoholic writer deprived of alcohol (*Time Without Pity*), the gentleman who falls for a gypsy (*The Gypsy and the Gentleman*) just as Tyvian falls for Eva (*Eva*), Bannion for Susan (*The Criminal*), the detective with a cold who suspects that his superiors are trying to stifle his investigation (*Blind Date*), and so on . . . In each case the potentialities of knowledge and understanding are hindered by some defect or some bond which, if it doesn't exactly shackle the individual and paralyse his will to act, at least sets him with his back to the wall. Added to this are two further catalysing elements—violence and alcohol—which provoke the crisis. "You thought of England as a country of old ladies drinking tea . . . The age of senseless violence has caught up with us too." (*The Damned*). And by their contrast, the storm centres, moments of almost contemplative quiet—the smell of scorching grass, the cry of mocking-birds, a young couple in the evening air (*The Dividing Line*)—make even more effective the outbursts of violence and collective hysteria.

But if the Losey character's goal is to secure power or understanding, money or sexual domination, we have seen that he not only dominates but is dominated. Most of these characters are losers who seem to take a masochistic pleasure in destroying themselves and in watching with morbid fascination the machinery of their own destruction. *The Gypsy and the Gentleman*, *Eva* and *The Servant*, to mention only three titles, tell the story of a destruction, of a descent into hell. Often the end result of this disintegration is death, with a chance of redemption for the Catholics (Barrows in *The Criminal*) whose prayers increase in fervency with the number of their sins.

Losey here reveals a touch of puritanism, which carries over into his somewhat biblical and rather simplified conception of the role of woman as the root of all evil: it is soon apparent that she has no place in this world of delicately balanced equilibrium, if indeed she is not excluded *a priori*. The duplicity of woman, resulting almost vindictively in death, recurs so often as a theme that one begins to suspect some settling of old personal scores behind it all.

The man kills the woman because she does not live up to the image he has made of her. At best, their love turns into a morbid fear of solitude. From *The Big Night* to *Eva* by way of *Time Without Pity*, there are countless instances of a woman leaving the man who cannot satisfy her after realising that he is trying to fashion her in his own image. And the desertion leaves open wounds, still aching years later with prejudices, inhibitions, and a desire for purity regained (the snow theme). For duplicity, here read duality. Man, for Losey, hesitates between two basic instincts—affection and sexual attraction, love of the soul and love of the body. He experiences a sort of timidity, a vague fear of the woman he admires (*The Criminal*, *Blind Date*), and cannot abandon himself to his desires unless with someone he need not respect—a social inferior, if necessary a prostitute (*The Gypsy and the Gentleman*, *Eva*, *The Servant*).

This ambivalence takes us to the heart of the matter. It would be too easy to see this universe as a new *Jungle Book* where two kinds of men—*Les Fauves et les Félines*: Graham and Stanford, Jan and Morgan, Tony and Barrett—confront or rather rejoin each other, either in the transference of their servitude or the similarity of their solitude. Which of them is

actually the prisoner? The fact is that Bannion is no more Barrows' prisoner than Barrett is Tony's servant. They are indivisible, two halves of a single cell, on whom Losey, obsessed by the need for synthesis in an art which flowers in universality, imposes a constant to and fro movement. Co-existing within each individual are the two essential impulses of man, but he is at first unaware of this. One impulse controls him completely. When he is brought into contact with another individual dominated by the opposite impulse, this meeting is specifically designed to allow each of them to discover their ambivalent unity, and the end of the film marks the dawn of their understanding. Whether they meet in death (*Time Without Pity*), or whether they part (*Blind Date*, *Eva*), or exchange places, is unimportant. Once revealed to themselves, they no longer need an image to conjure up their duality. From this meeting of two poles, positive and negative, truth is born.

The veil is torn, and one can follow Losey into this world of mirrors and reflections, a world of appearances, *trompe l'oeil*, pretence, where the characters all bear a family resemblance, where truth is falsehood and falsehood truth. One can understand the usurpations of personality (Eva steals the soul of Billie Holiday, Tyvian that of his brother), the exchange of positions (father for son, nephew for uncle, tramp for boy, servant for master—and vice versa). So, in a subtle play of relationships and transpositions, visually translated by means of mirror effects which accentuate the disorientation by making the spectator lose his bearings in space, Losey's theme emerges easily and smoothly: that of mutation, the transition from one state to another, like the adolescent's growth to manhood in *The Big Night*. A variety of transitions all lead to the same end: the growth to lucidity, the passage from darkness to light.

Throughout his career, through its ups and downs, Losey has worked patiently to realise this progression, without losing sight of the fact that his films are only ripples in the infinite expanse of time. Because Bannion is dead does not mean that prisons will cease to exist; because the memory of Eva fades, gondolas will not cease to sway through the canals of Venice.

* * *

Why, then, should this body of work which amounts almost to a scientific programme so often leave one with a sense of dissatisfaction? Partly the poverty of the scripts, and their skilful but very conventional adaptation; but perhaps also the fact that in satisfying his desire to reduce everything to essentials, this champion of lucidity suppresses everything which might not seem to serve his meaning. For Losey, to say something means to explain, translate, explain again, and offer analogies; and it also means a rigorous exclusion of non-essentials. A film becomes a series of equals signs: the danger is that this closed circuit collection of signposts in which Losey becomes trapped may result not only in a dilution of significance but a loss of creative energy. It is one thing to embrace the universe, quite another to register its secret heartbeats. In any case, as the film exists only through its meaning, and its symbolism exists only through the film, Losey's world is not so much a world as a setting for an allegory. And a work of art must be valued by what it is, not what it intends to be. What does it matter how deeply and how brilliantly he dives, if the artist surfaces laden with seaweed instead of pearls?

When Hamp, the soldier being executed by firing squad in *King and Country*, is asked by his defending officer if it isn't finished yet (if he isn't dead), and replies, "No, I'm sorry sir," Losey scores a fourfold bull: brutal concision, pinpointing of class barriers, exchange of roles, and complicity with his own aesthetic. The question which still remains is whether the world should be answerable only to a metaphysic of intelligence; whether the sole aim of a work of art should be significance.



The young turks of Spain

Claire Clouzot

TALKING ABOUT THE SPANISH CINEMA today is like talking about a magic phenomenon which everyone has heard of but no one has seen. These invisible spirits are actually a solid group of fifteen young men between thirty and thirty-eight years of age, who have been educated in the cinema, written an average of four scripts either for themselves or for other directors, hunted for financial aid, and finally directed from one to three full-length features and/or produced one or more shorts or features for friends in the past four years, yet whose names and works are totally unknown to the European filmgoer.

Such discrepancy between our ignorance and the vivid Spanish reality has to be at least tentatively explained.

For all practical purposes, the New Spanish cinema began in 1962-63 with the appointment of José María García Escudero at the head of the Office of Cinematography; from this stems the movement which has been variously called 'the new era' or 'era of liberalism', even if some initial hopes have not been confirmed, and the censorship barely relaxed. Javier Aguirre, Jaime Camino, Mario Camus, Julio Diamante, José Luis Egea, Antonio Eceiza, Jesus Fernandez Santos, Angelino Fons, Jorge Grau, Basilio Martin Patino, Antonio Mercero, Miguel Picazo, Francisco Regueiro, Carlos Saura



LEFT: FRANCISCO REGUEIRO'S "AMADOR". ABOVE: CARLOS SAURA'S "LLANTO POR UN BANDIDO".

and Manuel Summers have all matured and produced their most important films since that date.

Of the fifteen Young Turks, twelve come from the same cradle: the Official School of Cinematography or E.O.C. (*Escuela Oficial de Cinematografía*). Government sponsored, under the auspices of the Ministry of Information and Tourism, this is an institution where talents, individualities and rebellions might normally have been suffocated. None the less, it is here that all the true Spanish film talents originated, from Luis Berlanga and Juan-Antonio Bardem to the young men of today.

One might therefore be tempted to label these fifteen filmmakers as the 'E.O.C. group'; but this is where we encounter our first contradiction. The E.O.C. is an instrument, not a flag to rally round. As students, the future directors learn whatever they can, technically and humanly, from teachers such as Luis Berlanga, Julio Diamante or Juan Julio Baena (the best director of photography in Spain), and consider their final examinations (16mm. in the first year; fifteen minutes in 35mm. in the second year; half-an-hour in 35mm. for the final course) as a first opportunity, which might also be their last, actually to realise a film in almost professional conditions. After that, diploma in hand, they turn their backs on the school and start out with the idea of finally doing something of their own.

* * *

What they are likely to find on their road is no less contradictory. After long years of resistance from directors of the 'old wave', such as Saenz de Heredia, Ladislao Vajda, and other makers of movies starring Joselito and Sarita Montiel, the door of conventional movie-making is finally opening a crack. Yet, with the exception of Jorge Grau (who was assistant director to Berlanga, Riccardo Freda, etc.) and Antonio Eceiza (who worked for Bardem, Eugenio Martin and others), the newcomers generally make their first professional picture with no other experience than the three shorts they have shot at the School. Before beginning work on any film, they have of course to overcome all sorts of obstacles—some being normal stages of a dictatorial censorship, others inexplicable disappointments and often ordeals. One thing the fifteen directors have in common. At some point in their careers one of their scripts has been banned or subjected to delay; one or more of their films has been partially cut; many of their finished films (for Jaime Camino, Julio Diamante, Antonio Eceiza, Basilio Martin Patino, Francisco Regueiro, all of their films) have yet to be distributed as long as two, three or even five years after completion—or, if they have achieved distribution, they have been shown only in Barcelona. This paradoxical situation is further complicated by the fact that a financial and critical success does not necessarily protect its author: since making *La Tia Tula* (1963), and in spite of having an assurance of a producer, Miguel Picazo has not shot a foot of film nor been near a studio set.

Nevertheless, let us look at the latest major products and projects of the young Spanish cinema, in the hope that they may be available one day to Western European audiences.

The Young Turks can be divided into three sections: the central group, and two extremes. At one end stands Carlos Saura, older and more experienced than the others, tolerably well-known in and outside Spain for *Los Golfos* (1960) and *Llanto por un Bandido* (1964), and now at the peak of his maturity. He has just completed *La Caza* (*The Hunt*), which is a sort of cinematic psychodrama involving three middle-aged men, one-time friends who, after having lost contact for a number of years, find themselves 'projected' together in time and space during a rabbit shoot. Between dawn and twilight, they discover in each other weaknesses, vices, cowardices and personal tragedies, to the point where, through the unbreathable atmosphere of the desert of Southern Spain, their confused feelings gradually turn into a mortal hatred.

La Caza is a surprise both in its concentrated power and in a psychological control quite unexpected when one remembers that both script and film are the creation of a 38-year-old cineaste making only his third feature. The dangers of melodrama, of the revelation of the past (which is done here through brief monologues in the form of asides), of flashbacks, of the proximity of death and of the easy symbolic parallel between the rabbits, the dog, the rifles and the rivalry of the three men—Saura has resisted all these temptations. What he does is to build up a suffocating atmosphere, both climatically and psychologically; to select those little incidents which, in the high-tension drama of his single location and few characters, crystallise the tragedy. He is currently thinking about his next film, of which so far he knows only the title (*Peppermint Frappé*), and in which he would like to cast Serge Reggiani. It will, he says, be "a black comedy taking place in Cuenca."

At the other extreme is Antonio Eceiza, wild and untamed, a complete unknown, and perhaps the most daringly brilliant of the Young Turks. At thirty, though without having travelled much outside Spain, he is the most receptive and cosmopolitan of the group, maybe because he was born in San Sebastian near the French border. After a short film, *Across San Sebastian*, he made with Elias Querejeta another documentary called *A Traves el Futbol*. This nonconformist film built up a parallel between the history of Spanish politics since the crowning of King Alfonso XIII in 1902 and the developments in football (e.g., during the War the Spanish national team could only play against the Axis powers) until 1962, when the Argentine-born Di Stefano is shown holding the European Soccer Cup, Spain's greatest international triumph to that date.

Made with cold-blooded audacity, the film was first subjected to innumerable cuts by the censors, and then banned outright. Eceiza's full-length feature *El Proximo Otono* (*Next Autumn*; 1963) suffered the same fate, and it is only from his 1965 production *De Cuerpo Presente* (*Present in Body*) that one can judge his real talent. Based on a novel by Gonzalo Suarez, the film is a crazy succession of happenings linked by the presence of the "satyr in pyjamas," a sort of average man who, because he escaped from his coffin in his pyjamas, is taken for a sex maniac. Purposely called Nelson Bryner, so as to be identified with no particular nationality, the 'hero' is then exposed to all possible seductive advances from women who stand for the various types created by the popular cinema—the wicked, the goddess, the nympho, the tough and the tender.

Each woman is given a symbolic setting ready-made out of our cinema-going experience—friendship seen through a scene from a Western, violence and treason through torture in a thriller, and so on. But the most impressive of Eceiza's social criticisms through humour is his caustic parody of TV commercials, quizzes and interviews. This reaches its climax in one extraordinary scene where the hero, now famous as a wanted man, is implored by an influential publicity manager to sign a contract committing him to announce "Beba Ron-sin-Cola y viva mejor!" (literally "Drink rum without cola and live better"); a delicate allusion to the composition of the revolutionary cocktail 'Cuba Libre' which Spanish liberals

like to drink). If he once achieves complete control over production, budget, actors and soundtrack, it is easy to predict that Eceiza will turn out results which are likely to go far beyond the blackest humour of Luis Berlanga.

Next to Eceiza should be placed Francisco Regueiro, whose disillusioned view of humanity complements Eceiza's frankly humorous and satirical attitude. But unhappily Regueiro has not been able to accomplish anything since *Amador* (1964). One of the pet victims of the censorship, this film not only had its script mutilated (the sadistic hero played by Maurice Ronet was changed into a thief) but was further cut on completion. Regueiro has worked on several scripts, among them *Los Ultimos Romanticos* (*The Last Romantics*), written in collaboration with Eceiza, and claims that he might become "only a scriptwriter." "... There is a word in movies, 'commercial', which we know nothing about: neither ourselves, nor the producers, nor the distributors, nor anyone in Spain. Except Sarita Montiel," says Regueiro mildly. "As for me, producers find me picturesque. I talk to them about my projects, they like my subjects, but none of them can ever be made. ..."

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In the centre group of film-makers, we find what may be called the 'commercial' directors: film-makers such as Mario Camus, Miguel Picazo and Manuel Summers, those who by miracle or by compromise have found both critical and public acclaim. Picazo's *La Tia Tula* (*Aunt Tula*) and Summers' *La Niña de Luto* (*The Girl in Mourning*) turn up along with Buñuel, Brooks, Pasolini or Clive Donner, in the lists of the twenty best international films of the year sent in by readers of various popular Spanish movie magazines. Nevertheless, Picazo seems to be under the spell of fear of the 'second picture'. His present projects vary from an adaptation of *La Celestina*, on which he encountered censorship problems because of excessive realism, to a remake of a film of twenty years ago, *La Prodigia*, which would star Aurora Bautista, the remarkable actress from *La Tia Tula*. In spite of the impatience of Cesareo Gonzalez, his producer, nothing has as yet come of these projects.

Mario Camus has just completed a colour and 'Scope feature, *Con el Viento Solano* (*Gone with the East Wind*), which could be an international box-office success. Starring Spain's top Flamenco dancer Antonio Gadès in the role of a gypsy, the story recounts the colourful and pitiful adventures of Sebastian Vazquez, a stubborn and virile drifter who haphazardly becomes a killer and is hunted through Toledo and the province of Cadiz until he surrenders. The beauty of *Con el Viento Solano* is quite independent of the intentions of the director. In fact the intentions are too good, and result in a naive script, dialogue badly served by a poor sound track, and clumsy performances from the secondary actors. The dramatic beauty can be found in the physical presence of Gadès, not necessarily when he dances but when he walks or runs, when he gets drunk, locked in a kind of ascetic loneliness, or when he meets a solitary shepherd in the middle of nowhere. There is a visual splendour too, thanks to admirable photography by Juan Julio Baena which can easily compete with Gianni Di Venanzo's camerawork in *The Moment of Truth*.

As for Manuel Summers, he is at present shooting *Juguete Rotos* (*Broken Toys*), which looks quite promising. Leaving behind his earlier style of involved sentimentality (*El Juego de la Oca*) he is going back to the grinding tone of his E.O.C. film *The Little Old Man* and of his *Girl in Mourning*. Made up of different sketches, the new film deals cruelly but humorously with broken glories of the past: an old actor, a decadent singer, a Flamenco dancer, etc. It should satisfy the baroque taste of its Andalusian-born director.

* * *

The conclusions to be drawn from all this Spanish film activity are depressing and cheering at the same time. While talking to the Young Turks in Madrid, I got the impression that their optimism was stronger than their distress. It is probably part of the Spanish temperament to defend with fire a cause that is far from lost, even if it is in danger of political

(continued on page 103)

IN THE PICTURE

Report from Denmark

TAXED WITH THE FAILURE of Danish films to make much artistic impact on the international scene, Danish producers have had the excuse that it was economically impossible for them to produce artistic films in a country with only 4,500,000 inhabitants. This excuse hardly remains valid. An Act of Parliament which took effect at the beginning of 1965 is influencing all kinds of film and cinema activities in Denmark.

Cinema management itself is still operated on a system believed to be unique to Denmark. To run a cinema at all, it is necessary to have a licence from the Ministry of Cultural Affairs—or, in towns of less than 5,000 inhabitants, from the local authority. No person or organisation is allowed more than one licence, and the idea behind the system was of course to prevent the growth of chains of cinemas, or any large-scale concentration of production, distribution and exhibition interests. The licensing system, though the subject of much comment, was transferred without amendment to the new Act. An applicant for a licence is expected to satisfy certain cultural as well as financial qualifications. And this is the reason why licences have often been regarded as a sort of reward for contributions to the Danish cinema. Carl Dreyer, for instance, runs the Dagmar cinema in the centre of Copenhagen; Benjamin Christensen till his death ran a small suburban cinema. *En passant*, one might point out that the greatest sin of omission has been the failure ever to grant Asta Nielsen one of these licences.

Although this system remains unchanged, what the new Act has done is to establish a Film Fund, based on a 15 per cent tax on all cinema tickets sold. The rate of tax increases with the rate of the cinema's profits; and the Fund's total receipts for the first year of operation are estimated at about 18-20 million DKr, or something over £900,000.

For what purpose is this money intended? A certain amount is earmarked for pensions and subsidies to cinema owners, for administration, for the Danish Film Museum, and for Statens Filmcentral, the government organisation which exists for the purpose of producing, purchasing and distributing short films to schools, clubs,

etc. These various purposes will eat up about £300,000. The rest goes to 1) Educational purposes; 2) Production of short films; 3) Merit prizes to Danish films; 4) Production guarantees; 5) Financial aid for the preparation of scripts; 6) Merit prizes to distributors; 7) Loans to cinema owners wanting to modernise their cinemas; 8) Scholarships for film workers; 9) Financial support for Danish participation in film festivals.

Administration of the scheme rests with a number of committees and councils. The Film Fund is supervised by a committee on which government and film trade share equal representation. A Film Council, consisting of scriptwriters, directors, cameramen, composers, actors and critics, acts as the consultative body on questions of production guarantees, judges the artistic value of scripts submitted, and decides which films are to be awarded the annual merit prizes. A Short Film Council, set up not very long ago, will assist a Director who is to attend to the production of short films. At the moment, the whole governmental short film production is being reorganised.

Although there have of course been critical voices within the film trade, arguing for a more broadly based system of subsidies, it is generally agreed that the new legislation ought to achieve the aim of improving conditions for the artistic film. During the first year, grants adding up to some £11,000 have been made towards the preparation of 15 scripts. The most interesting of these projects is, of course, Carl Dreyer's synopsis of *Medea*. Production guarantees, at the rate of about

£15,000 per film (approximately 25 per cent of each film's budget), have been made to 11 pictures. And at the first distribution of merit prizes, which took place in December 1965, six features and nine shorts received awards adding up to a total of £75,000. Dreyer's *Gertrud* got the highest prize (£17,500); Jorgen Roos' documentary about the explorer Knud Rasmussen got £2,300. Further awards went to Danish film distributors in recognition of ambitious film importation—for such films as *Hamlet* (Kozintsev), *Muriel*, *The World of Apu*, *La Peau Douce*, *Yojimbo*.

It is obvious that the new policy must be in force for some time before it is possible to judge practical results. In Sweden, the introduction of a similar system produced an explosion of activity; in Denmark things are moving more slowly. In fact, it remains to be seen whether the problem of Danish film production has been solely an economic one or whether it is a question of talent—something far more difficult to solve. The talent problem is long-term; and belongs with the film school which will be started in Denmark next autumn.

IB MONTY

Salka Viertel

FRIEND AND CONFIDANTE of Garbo and Murnau, widow of the film director and poet Berthold Viertel (the original of the 'Bergmann' in Isherwood's *Prater Violet*), and scriptwriter of many of M-G-M's prestige productions of the 1930s, Salka Viertel now lives in Klosters, Switzerland, an exile from Hollywood following the period of the blacklist. Meeting her, one

CHAPLIN AND MARLON BRANDO ON THE SET OF "A COUNTESS FROM HONG KONG".



senses immediately the qualities of mind and heart that must have attracted the emigrés in Los Angeles to her famous salon during the war years and the late Thirties: Franz Werfel and Thomas Mann, Max Reinhardt and Berthold Brecht, Ernst Lubitsch and Fritz Kortner . . .

Over tea and cakes Mme. Viertel talks of Garbo and *Queen Christina*, Garbo and *Anna Karenina*, Garbo and *Two-Faced Woman*, for she collaborated on the scripts of them all. Her memories of working on *Anna Karenina* are pleasant and happy, of *Two-Faced Woman* the reverse. The decision to retire from the screen wasn't Garbo's alone; and certainly the tensions that must have accompanied the film's making are reflected in Garbo's performance, a semblance of gaiety barely concealing the malaise beneath.

Mme. Viertel's reminiscences go back to her arrival in America in 1928, and reunions in California with Ludwig Berger and Murnau, whom she had known in Germany where she began her career as an actress. (For her recent Murnau biography, Lotte Eisner consulted Salka Viertel on many details.) Inevitably, discussion comes around to the bitter McCarthy years, when her association with Brecht and others made Mme. Viertel a victim of the witch-hunt. For a while, like so many others, she wrote anonymously or pseudonymously: the narration for Renoir's *The River*, for example, is hers, uncredited. Eventually she left America disillusioned, not to return. For the past two years she has been working on her memoirs. There are few survivors of the heyday and twilight of Hollywood whose published recollections can be quite as eagerly awaited.

JOEL GREENBERG

Art Circuit

A DAZZLING VISION of fifty well-heeled cinemas, spread around the country from Brighton to Edinburgh showing intelligent films to audiences who care, was set before our eyes in the middle of December by Mr. Leslie Grade and Mr. Kenneth Rive. "We believe," they said when they announced plans for a new chain of luxury cinemas, "that quality films can be commercial when they are shown in the right houses."

The formation of Grade-Rive Limited is certainly an attractive marriage. Mr. Rive's company already has some of the right houses. Gala Films owns fourteen cinemas which show 'specialised' films in Cardiff, Birmingham, Liverpool, Coventry, Leicester as well as London. Into the bargain Gala handles about three-quarters of all the continental films distributed in Britain. Mr. Grade, on the other hand, could make the dream come true. The Grade Organisation is said to be worth £3.3 millions. Most of its interests are in the theatrical agency business (Julie Christie is about its hottest property at the moment), in summer shows and pantomime and to a small extent in film production (ranging from Cliff Richard to *The Servant*). Mr. Grade has said that he is only in the movie business to help his artists. Plainly the Grade-Rive circuit (and there is talk of Jacey coming in too) could help Mr. Grade to help them even more.

There's a chance too, some people think, that it could offer less fortunate independent British film producers a decent outlet for their films. At the moment Rank and ABC between them control 85 per cent of this country's first-release cinema seats.

But it is planned as a three-year operation and there is quite a lot that hasn't been



THE FILING SYSTEM RUNS AWAY FROM AUDREY HEPBURN. A SCENE FROM WYLER'S COMEDY ABOUT ART FORGERY, "HOW TO STEAL A MILLION DOLLARS AND LIVE HAPPILY EVER AFTER".

revealed. We know seats will cost between 4s. 6d. (cheapest) and 10s., and that Leeds, Nottingham, Newcastle, Sheffield, Brighton, Edinburgh, Glasgow, Kingston and Luton are among the towns chosen. But we do not know to what extent the chain would depend on second-release films (as does the 30-cinema Classic circuit). And what about programming? Will Godard have to be yoked to a nudie—as happened for weeks on end recently at Gala's Cameo-Moulin? When Mr. Grade says, as he did in December: "The public want to be entertained and we are going to see that they are," does he mean that the new company will regard with equanimity the quality of the films and the balancing of the books?

IAN WRIGHT

Pop Documentary ?

NANOOK OF THE NORTH (1922)
NIGHT MAIL (1936)
TURKSIB (1929)
BERLIN, SINFONIE EINER GROSSTADT (1927)
MAN WITH A MOVIE CAMERA (1929)
LOUISIANA STORY (1948)
FARREBIQUE (1946)
NUIT ET BROUILLARD (1955)
DRIFTERS (1929)
THE GENERAL LINE (1929)
SPANISH EARTH (1937)
LAS HURDES (1932)

The above list constitutes the twelve best documentary films ever made, according to a booklet recently issued by the Belgian Musée du Cinéma and unequivocally titled "The best documentaries in the history of the cinema." The booklet was intended to accompany showings in Brussels of some one hundred and fifty of the two hundred and twenty films listed in a poll conducted among international critics and historians by the Mannheim Film Festival in 1964. Both Mannheim and Brussels no doubt found the results of the poll helpful in stimulating interest in their own viewings; but one wonders what further purpose is intended to be served in issuing such a

booklet, with the authoritative imprint of the Musée du Cinéma, and disseminating it abroad.

In the first place, the result, as far as the "top twelve" are concerned, was so predictable and orthodox that someone in Mannheim or Brussels could have sat down and compiled it in ten minutes, thus saving a great deal of time and trouble. In the second place, the refusal of the Mannheim organisers to define their terms led to such a wide interpretation of the word "documentary" that one finds votes cast for such improbable titles as Polanski's *Two Men and a Wardrobe*, Bresson's *Journal d'un Curé de Campagne* and Shindo's *The Island*. But perhaps the worst feature is the way that the booklet itself has been compiled.

All sorts of permutations are worked on listings of the films and directors, but nowhere are the films listed as they are here, in voting order, with dates of production; nor is there any listing of the individual votes cast—surely the only really interesting aspect of the whole exercise. It is not very illuminating to know that there were forty-four votes for *Nanook* and three for *Listen to Britain*, but it could be enlightening to know who cast those three votes. The only two voters whose personal selections are revealed are in fact two of the British representatives, John Grierson and Thorold Dickinson, both of whom questioned the whole basis of the poll.

Since it was decided that these elaborate but not very informative lists were worth publishing, it is surprising that more effort was not made to check them. Several films are listed simply as titles, with no director, date or country of origin. Some, it is true, are Czech or Polish films masquerading under English titles; but they also include Jennings' *Spare Time* and Salomon's *Back in the Thirties*, neither of which is exactly obscure. And what is one to make of an entry which reads, "Scott of the Antarctic, Robert Falcon Scott. Great Britain. 1924." Can this be Ponting's *Great White Silence*? All of these things could easily have been verified, but it should not have been

necessary even to check the nationality of *Man of Aran*, listed as an American film.

The "Top of the Pops" attitude to films can of course be very entertaining if approached in a sporting spirit. And as long as the resultant rankings do not acquire the sanctity of Holy Writ no harm is done. Unfortunately the Brussels booklet does not seem to have made up its mind whether it was intended as entertainment or research. Its material is not so arranged as to provide an amusing parlour game, but it is too perfunctory and casual for reference.

BRENDA DAVIES

Oberhausen Blues

THE MOST SIGNIFICANT THING about the Oberhausen Festival, apart from the fact that it provides the only place on Federal Republic soil where films from the Communist bloc countries, including East Germany, can be seen, is that as well as its main jury, it also boasts a second jury. This is known as the Volkshochschule jury; the Volkshochschule is a very important German institution, something between night school and Adult Education. This is significant because the bias of the selection of shorts for Oberhausen is, I think, all too desperately educational. Talking with the organisers, it appeared that their main criterion for choosing a short is that it should lend itself to discussion; of which there was plenty.

Anglo-Saxons are looked down upon somewhat on these occasions; you don't even have a word for *problematik*, they sneer, so it's no wonder you don't go in for discussions. I suppose it was this liking for *problematik* and *thematik* and all the other *tiks* that dictated such a large wodge of *cinéma-vérité* type films from every country, investigating the problems of unmarried mothers, delinquent children, and ageing alcoholics. The other reason, of course, is the organisers' insistence that there are one hundred shorts worth showing every year in competition and fifty more for information.

Well, to this observer's mind, there aren't, and little good comes from pretending there are. So much for general observations on the festival. Out of the hundred and fifty odd shorts shown, there were about a dozen really good ones.

Some have already been seen here: *Le Mystère Koumiko* (not a short, but hooray for the cheat); Kast's *La Brûlure de Mille Soleils*; McLaren's *Mosaic*; Peter Smith and Luciana della Mura's *Knees Up Mother Brown*; Jim Clark's *Senghenydd*.

The best new film was probably Jaromil Jires' *Romance*. This Czech short was also a cheat, because it is really just one episode from a feature, but one was in no mood to quibble. (Neither was the jury: its Grand Prize for Fiction Film went to *Romance* just as the Grand Prize for Documentary went to *Le Mystère Koumiko*.) Somewhat reminiscent of Forman's world, *Romance* deals with an even more submerged milieu—a rootless 18-year-old plumber and the gipsy girl who picks him up outside a Prague cinema. She first insists on being paid, but when she gets him home she gives back the money because she has decided then and there to marry him. Somewhat confused, he is impressed by her claim that her father was a gipsy baron and worried about the fact that she has a five-year-old child. Provocatively inconclusive, *Romance* definitely reveals Jires (who also made the feature *The First Cry*) as an original voice.

Among a great many bad cartoons (it's strange how supposedly sophisticated audiences will applaud "art" cartoons that are actually not even as inventive as a Tom and Jerry, let alone a Tex Avery), Vlado Kristl's mysterious *Prometheus* and Manuel Otero's *Contrepied* stood out as films which relied neither on the anecdotal nor the visually derivative. Last of all, a strange American film called *Oh dem Watermelons*, a surrealistic satire on the myth of Negro sexuality. It was funny, inventive, and meaningful, and these were qualities in short supply at Oberhausen.

RICHARD ROUD

Buster

BUSTER KEATON DIED on February 1st, aged 70, in the middle of a year of triumphant return. There are still at least two Keaton performances to come: *A Funny Thing Happened* and *Two Marines and a General*; there are still the old films to be revived, as no doubt they will be. Meanwhile, BBC-2 took the chance for an *hommage* by showing the National Film Board's *Buster Keaton Rides Again*, made by John Spotton in 1964 while his colleague Gerald Potterton was shooting *The Railrodder*.

This isn't a tribute to a dead comedian but a record of a live one. Sad, of course, because cruelly shadowed by intimations of mortality, but concentrated on what surely must have been the most durable aspect of Keaton's whole personality: his resilient, indefatigable professionalism. Potterton jibs, for reasons of safety, at a gag in which Keaton is to drive his rail-car over a high viaduct with his head enveloped in a map. "I could do it in my sleep," snaps Keaton; and does it. Keaton in his private railway carriage, playing cards, listening to his wife, rousing himself for a birthday celebration, looks the tired man that he was. And then the professional question presents itself, and the face snaps into life.

The style of the film is the inevitable chatterbox *vérité*, diffuse and restless, all handheld camera and location sound, but backed up by affection. A judicious use of stills fills out the picture: the child Keaton, bold and bright member of that slightly sinister vaudeville family; the poet-gymnast of the golden years. Canada rolls by outside the train windows. There's a halt at a small town in Manitoba, where they call out the pipe band and stage a countrified celebration, with a woman who might have walked out of a Keaton film sternly hammering a piano. Momentarily, the carved totem-pole face is held in the lights for an unforgettable close-up. What comes through, as powerfully as in that famous scrap of film which shows Renoir painting with the brushes strapped to his hands, is a sense of genius as indestructible.

P.H.

A SCENE FROM LINDSAY ANDERSON'S "THE WHITE BUS", FROM A SHELAGH DELANEY STORY. TWO MORE DELANEY STORIES, YET TO BE FILMED BY OTHER DIRECTORS, WILL COMPLETE THE THREE-EPIISODE FEATURE "TRILOGY".



Work in Progress

Great Britain

MICHELANGELO ANTONIONI: His first trip to England as a film-maker (and, indeed, his first non-Italian film) since Peter Reynolds murdered Fay Compton in *I Vinti*. Terence Stamp plays the leading part of a fashion photographer; no other casting yet announced, although apparently there will be no part for Monica Vitti. Antonioni has said it will be "quite unlike my other films"—a comment we've perhaps learned to take with a few grains of salt. Carlo Ponti for M-G-M.

FRED ZINNEMANN: Adaptation by Robert Bolt of his own play *A Man for All Seasons*, about the life and death of Sir Thomas More. Cast headed by Paul Scofield, repeating his stage role, with Vanessa Redgrave as Margaret Roper. Columbia.

France

LUIS BUNUEL: Back to the original Gothic with a long-promised adaptation of Monk Lewis's *The Monk*. Only casting so far announced: Jeanne Moreau. Speva Films/Ciné-Alliance.

RENE CLEMENT: *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. The first film adapted from Proust, if not the first Proustian film. No details as yet on just how much of the novel Clément is trying to fit into one film.



Franklin Schaffner

David Wilson

A LINE OF HORSEMEN emerges out of the mist of a Normandy marsh; a flock of birds, alarmed by their appearance, suddenly takes to flight, filling the sky; the horsemen pass through a silent, dripping forest, pausing when they come across an old oak tree, its gnarled boughs hung with weird talismans and carved wooden faces; a dank, evil place, presaging doom. "This place has the dimensions of heresy," says one of the horsemen as they move on their way.

The opening sequence of Franklin Schaffner's 11th century Normandy epic, *The War Lord*, beautifully photographed in cool, pale colours, is invested with an eye for detail which is given full rein throughout the film. Strange Druid rites, painstakingly observed, stunningly mounted action sequences, acting and script strikingly different in quality from the usual lifeless banalities of American epics—Schaffner's direction throughout bears the stamp of an unusual intellect at work. Yet this is only Schaffner's third film. His first film, *Woman of Summer* (American title *The Stripper*), was only moderately received. "A promising actors' director," one critic observed, "with a talent for nuances of behaviour." His second, the political comedy-drama *The Best Man*, again produced the comment that Schaffner's flair was for drawing intelligent performances from his actors. An actors' director, then. Certainly a natural comment to make of a director who had come to films from television and the stage. And indeed the first thing one notices about *Woman of Summer* and *The Best Man* is the sharpness of the acting. But what of *The War Lord*? The acting is certainly intelligent, a lot more polished than what one has come to expect from within the dimensions of an American spectacular. But what is chiefly impressive about *The War Lord* is not the quality of the acting, but the visual splendour, the depth of its compositions, the verve of its action scenes. With *The War Lord*, Schaffner shows himself to be much more than an actors' director; and his talent as a director of cinema was there to be seen in his earlier films.

Schaffner's capacity for drawing out his actors, and the

sense of the immediate which he brings to his first two films, owe something to his experience in directing for television and the stage. He began as an actor in local productions, and while at college worked for a radio station as a disc jockey and programme announcer. After the war, he spent some time as an assistant director with the March of Time film unit, then joined CBS television and spent his early training covering public events, baseball matches and political conventions—hence presumably the frenetic accuracy of the television coverage of the convention in *The Best Man*.

After more television work for an independent company, Schaffner went to Hollywood and worked for two years on the show *Playhouse 90*. His stage direction of *Advise and Consent* was a huge success on Broadway, and Schaffner followed it by signing a three picture deal with Fox. He began work on his first film, to be called *A Summer World*, but for some reason the film was never completed and Schaffner returned to television. Among his successes in this period were a film series revolving around the work of a lawyer, *The Defenders*, a sort of intellectual's Perry Mason, over-burdened by its moralising tone but stylish and literate and directed with some verve; and Jackie Kennedy's celebrated tour of the White House. Schaffner returned to Hollywood and began work on *Woman of Summer*, the second of his scheduled films for Fox.

Woman of Summer is the story of the decline and fall of Lila, a stage illusionist's assistant, just one of the welter of driftwood that makes up the seedier segment of American show-business; the type who, like Osborne's Entertainer, never quite make it and wander from small town to small town scratching a living from one-night stands. The opening sequence is enough in itself to show that Schaffner knows the difference between letting his actors create their own mood and using his camera to pinpoint an atmosphere.

ABOVE: "THE WAR LORD". CHARLTON HESTON AND GUY STOCKWELL.



JOANNE WOODWARD IN "WOMAN OF SUMMER".

Behind the credits we see the brassy paraphernalia of Sunset Strip. It is the middle of the day, so the boulevard, with its switched-off neon lights and bleached hoardings, is an empty charade of what it becomes at night. A coach load of tourists pulls up, as Lila walks self-importantly across the street. The camera follows her, isolating her from the people gaping at her from their coach windows, then pulls back to catch one of the tourists asking whether that blonde vision was a famous star. "No, lady," says the coach driver, "that's just nobody." A few brief shots, but we know already that Lila is a failure, that the glamorous aura she gives off is false, her own image of herself in the role she would like to be playing—and nearly did play, as we learn later from the clip of a screen-test she carries round with her. Lila and the rest of her act move on to a small town in Kansas, where, after one performance of their guillotine illusion act (shown in meticulous detail), they break up and Lila goes to stay with a widow whom she had known as a child. The widow has a son, a garage mechanic whom Lila has already met, and the rest of the film is centred on the brittle relationship which builds up between Lila and the boy.

* * *

The film never quite transcends its origins as a stage play, but this may not be a flaw in the context of the heavy, claustrophobic atmosphere of the house, of the small town life of which it is a part, and of the sleazy strip-club of the final scene. Schaffner's direction is at once loose and stringent, centred on the actors, but using the sets and the camera to mark their isolation from each other. As in *The Best Man*, cluttered sets alternate with space to pinpoint nuances in the dialogue. When Kenny first feels attracted towards Lila, his feeling is caught from Lila's point of view as she stands in the room watching him framed behind the stairs; but towards the end of the film, when Kenny rejects the love she has now pivoted her future on, it is Lila who is framed by the stairs, trapped in the mesh of the life she desperately wants to give up.

Scenes like these, where the characters are enclosed by their surroundings and their emotions, where the dialogue is hesitant and expectant, are contrasted with the wide, empty, free-wheeling mood which Schaffner creates to capture their initial feeling for each other (long shots as they walk through the empty corridors of a school; Lila walking sylph-like through the garden of the house)—an effect of contrast which finds echoes in both *The Best Man* and *The War Lord*. Joanne Woodward as Lila, with hip-swallowing walk and platinum blonde wig, and Richard Beymer as Kenny, both give per-

formances which suggest that there was a strong rapport between director and actors; and if the film doesn't quite work in the end, the fault lies in the screenplay rather than the direction or the acting.

In *The Best Man* Schaffner moves to what seems a quite different field, the political arena of a national convention; but in a sense both films are typical of the crop of recent American films (one thinks of Frankenheimer's *All Fall Down* and *Seven Days in May*, of Mulligan's *To Kill a Mockingbird*, of Preminger's *Advise and Consent*, of Kubrick's *Dr. Strangelove*) which have emerged out of the post-McCarthy awareness that all is not well in Uncle Sam's pleasure garden. And it is not without significance that both Schaffner and Gore Vidal, who wrote the screenplay for *The Best Man*, were part of the Kennedy intellectual milieu.

Schaffner's second film has been praised for the biting wit of Gore Vidal's screenplay; and certainly the script is polished, literate and laced with a cynical humour which gets close to what must have been a political reality. Joe Cantwell (Cliff Robertson), a "Goldwater Democrat" ("the nice thing about you, Joe, is that you sound like a liberal, but at heart you're an American"), is opposed for the party nomination by a liberal, William Russell (Henry Fonda), who, according to the pundits, has the edge. Both men are in possession of material which will be enough to start a smear campaign against the other, and both are anxious to secure the endorsement of the dying ex-President. Within this framework Schaffner has produced a sharp-edged, frenetic, at times almost documentary account of their contest for the nomination. The film, like the real convention, moves at a roaring pace, from Russell's stream of patter to the reporters to the chaotic bustle of the convention preliminaries, and the quieter, but no less hurried, conflict between Russell and his wife.

Like Frankenheimer, Schaffner has a penchant for things mechanical, for the dehumanised trappings of the communication world. Here he cuts adroitly from the machinery of politics (Cantwell dealing out bribes as he flies over Los Angeles in a heli-cab, huge election placards, a battery of television cameras) to the stillness of Russell's visit to the ex-President on his death-bed. Fast cutting, and what look like real newsreel shots of the convention, give way to the final face-to-face clash between the two leading candidates in a basement prepared as a fall-out shelter, with rows of carefully labelled drinking water cans providing a backcloth to their collision. But the characters emerge as something more than mere ciphers moving against the frenzied backcloth of a political convention—out of the turmoil Schaffner has managed to draw performances from Fonda and Robertson, and from Lee Tracy as the ex-President, which give the

"THE BEST MAN": HENRY FONDA AS THE CANDIDATE, MARGARET LEIGHTON AS HIS SEMI-ATTACHED WIFE, ANN SOTHERN AS THE POLITICAL HOSTESS.



characters just the right blend of the real and the larger-than-life that makes big-time politicians what they are. (The only weakness is Shelley Berman's portrayal of the man with the information on Cantwell's wartime misdemeanours, which, like Peter Sellers' mad doctor in *Dr. Strangelove*, loses its point in caricature.) By skilful cutting from close-ups of the candidates flanked by posters and blown-up covers from *Time* magazine to overhead shots of the electrically charged atmosphere of the arena, by pointed use of camera angles (low-angled shots of Fonda and Robertson towering over their surroundings, downward tilted shots to pinpoint moments of humiliation), Schaffner's direction gives an edge to the characters which goes far beyond the sharp lines of the screenplay.

* * *

With *The War Lord* Schaffner has moved from the field of contemporary America and trodden a path where not a few talented directors before him have come to grief. What impresses about *The War Lord* is not merely that as an epic it centres on a hero who turns out to be a failure, nor that it sustains a consistently literate script (by Millard Kaufman and John Collier), nor that it looks so magnificent, but that within the narrow framework of an epic Schaffner has managed to capture the essence of a setting and a period. Here is a corner of early medieval Europe in all its splendour and all its mystery, a Europe at the crossroads between the weird, mystic strangeness of the Dark Ages and the new order which the Norman conquest brought in its train. Into the story of Chrysagon (Charlton Heston), a Norman war lord defending his village stronghold against the attacks of Frisian invaders, Schaffner has woven a pattern of weirdly fascinating detail.

The opening sequence, as the Normans emerge out of the mist of the marsh and pass through the dank forest, conjures up a sense of primitive mystery which is echoed throughout the film. Schaffner cuts from a panoramic view of the whole settlement to the interior of the circular tower which is the solitary symbol of Norman strength in the village. The tower has just been attacked by Frisians, and as the war lord climbs its winding stone steps the camera picks up the signs of the attack in upturned tables and corpses strewn about the floor, finally coming to rest on a shot of the naked bodies of the previous war lord and his lover, sprawled out in the fly-infested room at the top of the tower. The scene bodes evil, and Schaffner later picks up this sense of unease: recurring shots of the hawk which the war lord keeps in the tower, the bee which flies from the wreath of white flowers worn by Bronwyn (Rosemary Forsyth), the virgin bride, the screeching birds which swarm from a tree as Chrysagon tries to embrace her, the unearthly masks of the Druid wedding ceremony, the wooden effigies driven into the tree. Schaffner punctuates the film with details like this in what seems an almost Frazeresque passion for the minutiae of heathen rites and superstitions; but far from being arbitrary pieces of set decoration, the details are always heavy with ominous suggestion.

This sense of uneasiness, of something beneath the surface, is also brought out in the way Schaffner handles the scenes between Chrysagon and Bronwyn. Chrysagon learns from the village priest that the war lord can by tradition claim the *ius primae noctis* over any virgin bride in his domain. Feverish from a festering wound, and taunted by his brother that Bronwyn has bewitched him, he duly claims the right. He has first seen Bronwyn when he rescued her from his hunting dogs, and when she runs away he follows her. As he dismounts, we see Bronwyn in long shot from under the bridle of Chrysagon's horse. The shot is repeated when Chrysagon reaches her, then repeated in a different way—from under the arched bough of a tree. And the sequence ends with the camera following Chrysagon and Bronwyn as they walk under the bough, and finally tilting up to fill the screen with the birds swarming from the tree.

Here it is not the dialogue but the way Schaffner has assembled his shots that emphasises the isolation of the characters, an effect repeated in the scene where Bronwyn is brought to the war lord in his tower immediately after her



"THE WAR LORD": CHARLTON HESTON.

wedding to a man from the village. The sequence begins with a close-up of the bird in the tower; the camera then cuts to a shot of the torch-lit procession as the villagers lead Bronwyn towards the tower. Then follows a series of alternating shots: of Chrysagon's face as he watches the procession, of a row of candles on the long oak table in the tower, and of the procession as it approaches. When Bronwyn reaches the tower, the first shot we see of Chrysagon and her together is of them framed behind the rafters in the roof; and throughout the sequence lighting and set-ups give dramatic emphasis to the twinges of doubt Chrysagon feels in claiming this primitive right. He takes Bronwyn into his room, and the sequence ends with a low-angled shot of the tower looming up into the darkness as a symbol of momentary strength.

The colour contrasts here, warm reds and browns of the interior contrasted with the steely blue of the ramparts, are startling, but no more so than in the rest of the film. Schaffner was fortunate in having, in Russell Metty, a cameraman who could bring out both the quietly exquisite colours of the marsh and the sharper tones of the interiors (especially in several depth shots where the contrasted colours of a grouping add an extra dimension to the frame). But the credit for the magnificently staged action sequences must be all Schaffner's. Chrysagon and Bronwyn stand at the top of the tower looking out into the dawn, while below the attacking Frisians climb silently up the ramparts and begin to hack away at the drawbridge. There follows a series of attacks on the tower each more comprehensive than the last, incorporating the whole range of medieval warfare, from battering ram to siege-tower, boiling oil and a hidden ballista which catapults huge fiery boulders through the air. The appearance of the gargantuan siege-tower lumbering towards the tower is spectacularly dramatic. But, strong spectacle though this is, it is also illustrative of Schaffner's concern for detail: these instruments of war are magnificently assembled and look and behave authentically in a way which suggests that Schaffner went to some trouble to get them to resemble their prototypes.

With *The War Lord* Schaffner shows himself to be a director who can not only produce intelligent adaptations of stage plays (and *The War Lord* is based on a play—rather loosely, one presumes), but can make of them something which bears his own very individual stamp. Recently he has been working in Europe on a pilot for a television series. One can only hope that television doesn't reclaim him: after *The War Lord* his next venture in the cinema should be nothing if not interesting.

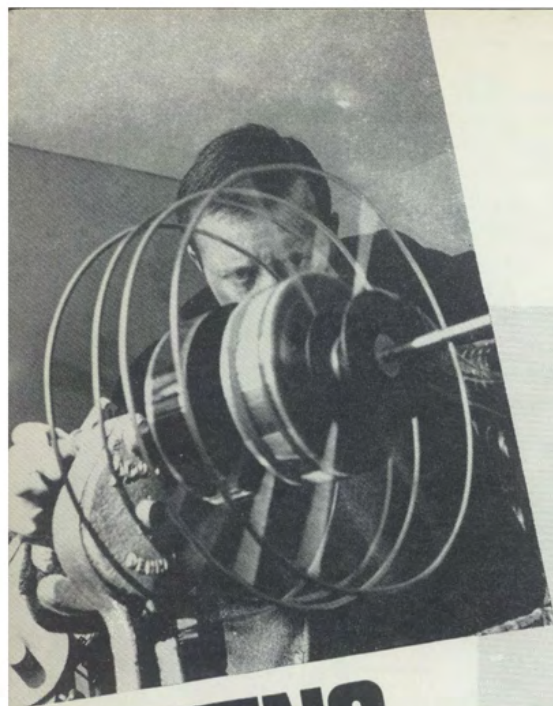


ALAIN RESNAIS

La Guerre est Finie

PORTE	GATE	VOL	VOL
16 ←		FLIGHT	FLIGHT
		VIA	VIA
		HORAIRE SCHEDULE	HORAIRE SCHEDULE
		EMBARQ. BOARD.	EMBARQ. BOARD.





PUTTING THE MAGIC IN IT

Two editors, James Clark
and Anthony Harvey,
discuss their work with
Roger Hudson

There is an ambulance parked near and the body in the road
is being lifted onto a stretcher.

AMBULANCEMAN

He's alive.

ROBERT

Two small beers is all I had. I've hurt
my knee.

He draws back his torn trousers to show a deep cut in his
knee. The POLICEMAN walks over to the ambulance.

ROBERT

He walked right out. I'm sorry, I'm
not myself -

He buries his face in his hands.

CUT TO

159. DELETE

160. INT. RAOUL'S FLAT. NIGHT.

It is luxuriously furnished, what we can see of it, full of self-
conscious "effects" - lighting, outre furniture, etc.

A cine projector has been rigged up. A white screen erects
itself against the far wall and the projector runs wild white
light onto it. Musique-concrete from a tape recorder.

RAOUL
(in the light - echoing
Robert's stance)

Alors, nous jouerons la specialite de la
maison. C'est une espece existentielle du
cinema-verite! Lumumba tu t'en souviens?

LUMUMBA

Eh, oui!

DIANA

(grabs Miles)

What's it all about?

Above left: Anthony Harvey in the cutting-room.

The script extract is from "Darling". As Jim Clark explains (see p. 81),
the sequence in Raoul's flat in Paris was covered by forty camera set-ups.
In this extract from the opening of the sequence, the pencil lines and
numbers indicate separate set-ups and the range of action covered by each.

TONY HARVEY: "I had a terrifying experience on *The Angry Silence*. It was the scene where Dickie Attenborough goes into the works canteen for lunch, a complicated sequence covered by a great number of set-ups. There is a sea of faces with the camera moving over them, and suddenly we cut to an enormous mouth saying 'SHUT UP!' We edited the sequence and thought it tremendous. Some weeks later I took another look at it. I had some new ideas which I thought might improve it . . . I started again, took it apart, and recut in many versions . . . None of them was really as exciting. I started to put it back as I had first thought of it—and I couldn't. It was impossible to find the exact timings and rhythms. I finally cut it as closely as I could to the original, but it had lost much of its impact and spontaneity. Since that day, whenever I have had a complicated sequence to put together I have always had a dupe print made as a record to refer back to. It has proved invaluable, because one's first instincts are almost always right."

There we have it. Editing is selection and timing: knowing—or guessing—exactly the right frame on which to make the cut. The editor makes this decision any number of times throughout the film. How does he do it?

ANTHONY HARVEY. Started in films as an actor—playing Ptolemy in Gabriel Pascal's 'Caesar and Cleopatra' during his school holidays. Won a scholarship to RADA, but had to leave after a year when his step-father, actor Morris Harvey, died. Gave up acting to join the Crown Film Unit, breaking down films in the Library Department, but still attributes part of his editor's sense of timing to early experience as an actor. After National Service, worked as second assistant editor on 'The Long Memory,' then as first assistant. Edited his first feature, 'Private's Progress,' at 22 ("the Boultings are wonderful at giving one a chance"). Credits include 'I'm All Right, Jack,' 'The Angry Silence,' 'Lolita,' 'The L-Shaped Room,' 'Dr. Strangelove,' 'The Spy Who Came In From the Cold.' Is now trying to make the jump to director with a film of LeRoi Jones' play 'The Dutchman'.

JAMES CLARK. Showed hired films to local children at 6d. each for charity—until irate parents stopped him after a screening of 'Potemkin' produced nightmares. At Oundle, founded school film society. Joined his family's printing firm, but left after three years for a £3 a week job with small company making industrial films on 16mm. At 21 got a job in the cutting-rooms at Ealing, then resigned ("regarded as very bad form") to edit a children's feature for Basil Wright. Found himself "up an alley as a freelance no one had ever heard of," so went back to assistant editing with Jack Harris ('Prince and the Showgirl', etc.). First job as editor on a major feature at 26: Stanley Donen's 'Surprise Package'. Credits include: 'The Innocents,' 'Term of Trial,' 'Charade,' 'The Pumpkin Eater,' 'Darling'. Has directed commercials, some documentary, including the Tours prize-winner 'Senghenydd', and hopes to make his first feature later this year.

PROCEDURE

Shooting starts. For shooting, a script is divided into scenes (set-ups), each of which may be taken any number of times until the director is satisfied. He will then ask that the best two or three or more of these takes be printed. Prints arrive from the processing laboratories the following day and are shown at rushes (dailies in America). Here the director chooses the takes he wants to use and the editor, who is employed from the first day of filming, marks them off in his shooting script. On occasion the editor may disagree with the director's choice, but "there is usually only one take where everything comes together, where the lighting is right, the camera is right, and the artist is giving the best performance."

In theory then the editor is left with only one take of each scene, which he has to join together to make a sequence and the sequences together to make a film. In practice, he still has prints of the other takes and may well use small pieces from each of them to get the results he wants. So judgment is called into play on which are the most effective pieces of acting, etc., as well as which are the most effective places to cut.

JAMES CLARK: "An important part of editing is selecting those moments which are best for you and the film, and you may have to go over the material countless times before you decide. I recall that on *The Prince and the Showgirl* Olivier and his editor, Jack Harris, used bits and pieces of countless takes of the same scene, thus making Marilyn Monroe appear to give a marvellous performance. Anyone seeing the rushes could have had serious doubts. Jack called it 'love-cutting'."

As soon as the whole of one sequence has been shot, which is after about two weeks filming, the editor can start cutting.

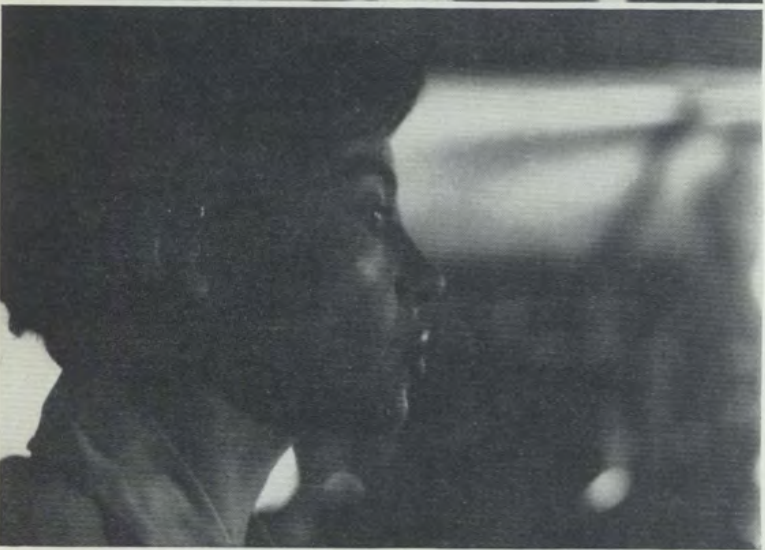
CLARK: "Some directors like to see each sequence as it is cut. Jack Clayton and I would start even to polish sequences at that stage, so that I would be cutting new material every day and altering old at the same time. Also some directors like to have their confidence raised by seeing sequences as they come off the assembly line. John Schlesinger, on the other hand, is happy to see a lot of assembled film maybe once a week."

The editor seems to have a good deal of freedom in this first stab at a sequence. I checked on this with Bryan Forbes. "The way I work is to let an editor go away and do what I call a 'free assembly', without reference to me but trying to follow the sequence of my shots. Most good editors can follow the way a director has shot a film. Then he'll show me this free assembly for each scene and we'll whittle away at it. The editor may hit it first time. I remember something Tony Harvey did on *The L-Shaped Room* which was so right that I said 'It's perfect.' But he started to work on it again, like a painter who continually paints over, until finally I made him go back and, frame by frame, put it back to the very first way he had assembled it. It's the scene of Leslie Caron walking in a street, a series of overlapping close shots which is supposed in theory to be terribly ugly, just to keep superimposing, without taking her out of frame to keep putting another frame on top. It was perfect as far as I was concerned."

Tony Harvey remembers it slightly differently. "The scene was planned in the script as a series of dissolves. Bryan had shot it in exciting long-shots, medium shots and close-ups, walking past shop windows. I tried an experiment with it by cutting erratically instead of dissolving, so that, watching, you kept going in and out, closer and away again, to show that she was getting dizzy. By losing the dissolves one had injected a nervous feeling that was dead right for the mood of the scene." Either way, it was the editor's creativity that determined the end result.

Assembly work goes on until about two days after the end of shooting, when the editor will have a first-cut ready to show the director. The results of about three months filming have been put together into, say, two and a half hours screen time, for a film which will eventually have to be cut down to a final length of between 100 and 120 minutes, "depending on how long it takes to tell the story." All the roughnesses are still there; scenes go on far too long; the total effect is depressing. "We go home feeling pretty suicidal," Harvey says.

Editor and director now start to run the film reel by reel,



analysing every cut in detail, taking an average of a reel a week. "Then we take a look at the whole film again. You can spend a lot of time on one scene and make cuts which seem absolutely right when you are seeing only that sequence. Then you look at it in the context of the rest of the film, and the cuts may seem completely wrong."

They go through it again. The director makes suggestions which may be general or specific, and the editor carries them out. The editor makes suggestions, tries out alternative approaches, then seeks the director's approval. "Ten to twelve weeks is the average time it takes to edit a film." The composer is called in and the dubbing editor starts to lay his tracks. "This doesn't mean that the editing has been finalised. One may decide to extend a shot even after the music has been recorded. Sound effects which one has never heard before may alter ideas of how long a shot should be."

HUDSON: *What chance does the editor have of getting to know the director's intentions for the film? How much is discussed beforehand, or during filming?*

CLARK: "We don't usually discuss much beforehand: there isn't enough time. Some directors like to have a talk about a scene before they shoot it. John Schlesinger would do that. And I think a discussion of that kind is useful as it helps to clarify the director's own attitude to a scene. He often needs to convince himself of his own decisions."

HARVEY: "Marty Ritt is extremely concerned that you understand what he's trying to do. He likes to discuss every psychological aspect, the relationships of the characters, the whole mood in fact, and to talk over each scene many times. He really uses people as a kind of sounding board, as John Le Carré once said. Kubrick works very much the same way. He has the most fantastic energy of any man I know. I don't believe that he sleeps more than four hours a night. The great beauty of his films is that it's as though he were looking at people through a microscope. He lives for film-making. I was eighteen months on *Lolita* and a year on *Strangelove*: looking back, I feel I learnt more about films then than at any other time of my life."

HUDSON: *Does a director say how he wants a scene edited or ask for specific rhythms?*

CLARK: "If he has any specific cuts that he has designed in his head, he will tell me in rushes. For example, he'll say, 'I'd like you to cut to the mid-shot as the hero gets up.' So I'll cut as he tells me. But very often he doesn't say how he wants it in particular, so you cut it according to your own ideas. Then, when he sees the sequence, the director will say, 'I'd rather you didn't use the close-up there but used the two-shot instead, and saved the close-up for the last line.' It's easier for a director to judge the way a scene is working when it's out of rushes form and into the first assembly."

THE MENTAL MECHANICS

I asked Tony Harvey how he puts an actual sequence together, how he keeps control of the material to make the job manageable. He gave the climactic scene of 'The Spy Who Came In From the Cold' as an example.

HARVEY: "The climax of the story is a trial which takes place behind the Iron Curtain, and in it all the characters in the film are assembled. I put the scene together in the simplest possible manner by joining the long-shots together so that all the dialogue is there, but without using close-ups unless there is no other way of linking two long-shots. Then I look at this assembly many times and gradually, over a period of three to four weeks (it's a very complicated scene that runs 35 minutes), I insert close-shots to make dramatic points. It's like a painting, where you block in areas of colour on a canvas and add in the details later rather than starting at one corner in full detail and working your way across. So with films, you don't try to go from A to Z joining in close-shots, medium-shots and long-shots as you go along, but first of all make an overall construction and then add the key moments as close-shots. And in this particular sequence, where you have so

many different faces to cut to, I think you'd get yourself into a hell of a mess if you started by putting them all in at the beginning. Marty Ritt and I referred back to this sequence over a period of about two months, looking at it and rearranging it."

HUDSON: *To what extent does the script serve as a guide?*

HARVEY: "Well, I read the script several times from the moment it is handed to me. I try to submerge myself in it completely so that by the time I start to cut I know it back to front. In the earliest stages of film assembly one uses it as a record of how many angles and takes have been used to cover a scene (the assistant editor marks these details in it from the continuity sheets). But after a rough-cut has been made I never refer back to the script at all . . . unless, somewhere along the line, I begin to lose perspective, and then, of course, it's invaluable."

Jim Clark described how the process worked for the French party scene from *Darling*.

CLARK: "It was a frightening sequence when laid out for cutting. When all the rushes were there I looked at it and thought, 'What do I make out of all this?' They had shot for four days and covered it from every possible angle. [He looked up his marked script and found that there had been forty camera set-ups for that one sequence.] But once you take the first bite into a sequence like that, it's like being thrown into a swimming-pool. You just do it. You cut all those forty shots together. The first time you do it, you're really trying to put it in some sort of shape. You chop off the clapper boards and you put in the bits you feel should be used from each take."

The first shot was a pan over the crowd, taking in some dialogue, continuing on to a 16mm. projector which is switched on straight into the camera lens, and ending in a whip-pan. This had to be cut in the middle of the whip-pan to join the next shot, which comes out of the pan on to a man standing by the projection screen talking.

"After that, nothing was fixed except for the lines of dialogue that I had to include. I knew that John Schlesinger wanted to make it a bizarre sequence with a harsh edge to it, so I tried to select the images that best achieved this. There was lots of deep focus, and they had played with different lenses and smoke effects; there were creatures appearing and disappearing. On this particular scene I had had very little preparatory discussion with John, and he was dealing with characters I wasn't in tune with from my own experience. The dialogue was there and one worked round that. The pace was largely governed by the strong bongo drum rhythm which was used on the floor during shooting and was going to be used on the track.

"Well, now, I do the first cut; I put it all together; I look at it. I say, 'That doesn't work, that's too long, that shot of him is the wrong length, we must get back to her . . .' We don't see enough of Julie undressing, for example. In one shot she is still wearing her own clothes, then suddenly in a long-shot there I notice she has already changed into a man's shirt and tie. So in order to get that point over, I have to go through all the trims of all the stuff I've cut to look for a little piece of film which will show Julie getting out of her dress and putting on something else. Then I insert that.

"I will re-cut the sequence probably two or three times myself before I ever show it to the director. When I do, there are obviously things which he doesn't like. He may remember bits of scenes he particularly liked at rushes which I haven't included, so I will have to sort them out and put them in. He makes notes, I make notes. You get—and make—hundreds of notes during the editing of a film."

Jim Clark read out some notes relating to the scene. '*Speed up opening of party.*' "That means that the cuts were all too long where the characters began to dance around the room. They all needed shortening. That's simple enough." '*Speed up all questions.*' "During the course of the game, when the music stops, somebody is caught by the light of the projector and has to answer questions. I'd allowed a lot of murmuring to go in between questions and answers and after each answer. John, quite rightly, wanted the questions to come stabbing immediately after the end of an answer. In other words, those

bits of surplus film had to be dragged out." At another point they had wanted to lose some dialogue, so Clark simply cut to a general shot of the party over the shoulders of the principals and brought up the background noise so the audience would not notice that a line was missing.

GUIDELINES AND CONVENTIONS

Are there any guide-lines? What does an editor look for when deciding which pieces of film to use?

HARVEY: "When we look at rushes I am primarily concerned with choosing the most exciting pieces of acting. Even if the pieces of takes that we choose don't join up, make bloody awful cuts, I'd rather use them for the extra dramatic effect.

"I concentrate on the acting and try to smooth out the scene later on. If there's a moment that's unreal in the acting, it will completely kill the scene, so always the most important thing in editing is truthfulness in the use of the performances. My greatest fear has always been that of becoming too technical. Sitting on a moviola day after day, year after year, one is in danger of becoming obsessed with the mechanics so that they take over from everything else. Too many people today are concerned about whether this will make a good tracking shot, or whether scenes will cut together. You can lose the whole point of a scene that way. Of course, you have to know all the technical possibilities, but you need to know them so well that they become second nature, not so that you use them to distort the material you've got.

"I've always thought that anyone involved in the creative side of film-making, every writer, producer, director, editor, as well as actor, ought to read the two books that Stanislavsky wrote about acting, *An Actor Prepares* and *My Life in Art*. They are so fantastically simple and tell you all you need to know."

HUDSON: *Is there anything that helps you decide when to cut?*

HARVEY: "If an actor is giving something terribly exciting in terms of performance, I think it is important to stay on his face, even though the conventional thing is to cut every so often to the person he is talking to. I think the audience can imagine the other character's reactions for themselves, and they know he is there so that one doesn't need to keep reminding them. There was a scene in *Lolita* where Sue Lyon is talking to James Mason and they are alone in the room: she was so extraordinary that we remained on her for the entire scene without cutting to him at all. This isn't a rule of course: every scene in every film calls for a different treatment.

"If I do have a rule at all, it is to look at the actor's eyes. They give you a good guide to the emotion that is going into the performance and sometimes a guide as to where to cut. You could easily be in danger of losing something tremendous if you cut away from an actor too sharply at the end of a speech. You may want to hold on to that misty look in the eyes for another ten feet or so. But again there is no rule. If two characters are yelling at one another, for instance, it's usually more dramatically exciting to cut sharply."

CLARK: "I don't think there are any basic rules, though there may be conventions which arise from time to time and influences which people accept consciously or unconsciously. Just recently it has become fashionable to dispense with dissolves in getting from one scene to another because audiences have become accustomed to rapid changes of scene. In the old days, you wouldn't dream of going from one sequence to another without some sort of optical mix. Things are much more abrupt now, as they are in life. That's a change of style; but there are no rules. You are dictated to entirely by the material."

HUDSON: *When was 'the old days'?*

CLARK: "Round about the period of the Forties and early Fifties, when films were made with a much more rigid style. For example, if you had a dialogue scene—I'm thinking especially of American films—the first thing they did was to shoot a master shot of the scene all the way through. Then they would move the camera closer in and do a two-shot all through. Then a close-up on each character all through. So the film was then, more or less, *created* in the cutting rooms,

The Innocents



1. Miles: "... Laura has been bad as well ..."



5. Miss Giddens: "But Miles ..." (5 ft.)



2. Miss Giddens: "Miles! What are you hiding under your pillow?" (shot runs 7 feet)



6. Miss Giddens: "... its neck ..." (6 ft.)



3. Miles: "I'm not hiding it. I'm keeping it warm ..." (7 ft.)



7. Miss Giddens: "... it looks as though ..." (2 ft.)



4. Miles: "... I found it this morning. It's one of my pigeons. And I couldn't, could I, leave it out there alone?" (7 ft.)



8. Miss Giddens: "... he may have broken it!" (3 ft.)

and it was up to the editor to select the moment at which he cut from one angle to another in the dialogue.

"Doing it that way of course allowed them to cut out dialogue at will, because they always had something else to cut away to. These days a director is much more likely to take a chance and say, 'This is how I'm going to shoot this scene: one moving camera shot right the way through and a close-up on that one speech.' We are much more mobile than we used to be; the camera moves about more. But there is less cover shot for each scene, and therefore there comes a time when you cannot cut a line which you might wish to cut.

"There was another old rule. They used to say, 'Don't cut to a scene when the camera is in motion, cut just before the camera starts to move.' It was supposed to be ugly on the eye if you cut to a travelling shot from a static shot. But one does it all the time now. One has only to go to a Dick Lester film to see that there are no rules and, if there are, break them."

Clark did admit, however, to one personal short-cut. He has a fairly standard way of cutting the point at which a character who is sitting finishes speaking and stands up. "I usually find myself cutting to the long-shot for the exit at the point where the actor begins to get up. But this is a question of preference. And if I can avoid it, I never let a character get out of a door: it's enough to let him get to the point of opening it. I've seen films where characters open doors, go through them, close them, and the audience has to sit through all that . . . There's a great deal of boredom in films if you are not very careful; an inclination to hang on to things simply because they are there."

MATERIAL DICTATES STYLE

HARVEY: "*The Spy Who Came in From the Cold* is a film where the material dictated something basic in the cutting. It is a story about a failure of a man, essentially a quiet story. There were plenty of opportunities for exciting cutting, as in any spy story. But we found it would have been wrong for this particular spy story. We realised during the editing period that, instead of using hard and dramatic cuts, it would be more fitting to use long slow dissolves to match the bleak and austere mood of the story.

"On *Dr. Strangelove* we made our first cut following the original construction of the script quite closely, so that one flashed backwards and forwards a great number of times between the aeroplane, the War Room and the Air Base. It was the most stunning script I have ever read; the way it was constructed was perfect; but it just didn't work in edited film. It was too confusing—you just didn't know where you were half the time. And there was no variation of pace or build-up of tension. We found by experiment that, if we stayed for much longer on each setting, everything became clearer and interest was held much more strongly."

STYLE DICTATES CUTS

CLARK: "I think that on *The Innocents* Jack Clayton and I found we evolved a sort of style in the cutting. We were looking for a cutting style in which things would appear calm on the surface, but at the same time there would be undercurrents of unease. In order to get this, we would have quite a number of fairly long takes, with an occasional vaguely disturbing sharp cut. For example, there is a sequence in which the little boy, Miles, is in bed, and the governess, Deborah Kerr, is uneasy about something, fancies something is wrong. The scene is played quite calmly until a certain point when she says, 'You've got something under your pillow. What's that under your pillow?' You hear her getting uneasy, slightly hysterical, and the boy denies it. Then we cut to her taking something out from under the pillow, and it is a dead pigeon. It was a beautiful white pigeon with its neck broken, and for some reason, I think from the way it was shot and from the moment when we cut it in, it was a very nasty image at that moment. You can't say that is all due to the cutting, of course, but the moment you cut to a shot like that is very important. The precise moment you expose the nerve is something you can't determine beforehand, and that is a

matter of the cutting. We altered that particular cut many times until we got it at the point that we felt was right in relation to the dialogue."

That was how Jim Clark remembered it when I interviewed him. When he had a chance to refer back to his script, giving the actual dialogue and the set-ups into which the sequence was split, he was able to go into further detail.

This part of the scene was covered in five camera angles:

- (a) Close Shot: Miss Giddens
- (b) Close Shot: Miles
- (c) Mid-Shot: Miles and Miss Giddens, favouring Miles
- (d) Close Shot: Dead Pigeon
- (e) Big Close-Up: Dead Pigeon

The dialogue ran as follows:

MISS GIDDENS: Miles, what are you hiding there?

MILES: Hiding?

MISS GIDDENS: There, under your quilt.

MILES: I'm not hiding it. I'm keeping it warm (pulls out pigeon from under pillow). I found it this morning—one of my pigeons, and I couldn't—could I?—leave it out there alone.*

CLARK: "Now, we were after this edgy feeling—trying to share Miss Giddens' misgivings about this angelic, possessed child. Obviously the first line could be played on Miss Giddens' close-up; then probably cut round to the boy's close-up or the two-shot for 'Hiding?' Then back to Miss Giddens for 'There, under your quilt.' (In fact, I think we played 'There' on Miss Giddens, but then cut to the two-shot, putting in an artificial pause on the sound-track and overlaying 'under your quilt.')

"The next section is the tricky bit. Miles says 'I'm not hiding it. I'm keeping it warm.' Either you play the line on his close-up so that the audience doesn't see the dead bird, thus allowing a reaction from Miss Giddens; or you see him pull out the bird in the two-shot and then cut to her reaction. Or (third possibility) you cut back to Miss Giddens earlier, overlay 'I'm keeping it warm' over her close-up and stay on her for the reaction. Or (fourth version) you stay on Miss Giddens' close-up as Miles says 'I'm not hiding it' and cut to him for 'I'm keeping it warm.' Whatever version we finally used, the aim was to emphasise Miss Giddens' feeling of terror as she saw the dead bird and recognised its implications—and we would have tried many more than four ways before arriving at the final version.

"I do think that film had a kind of cutting style. I know I was rather pleased with it."

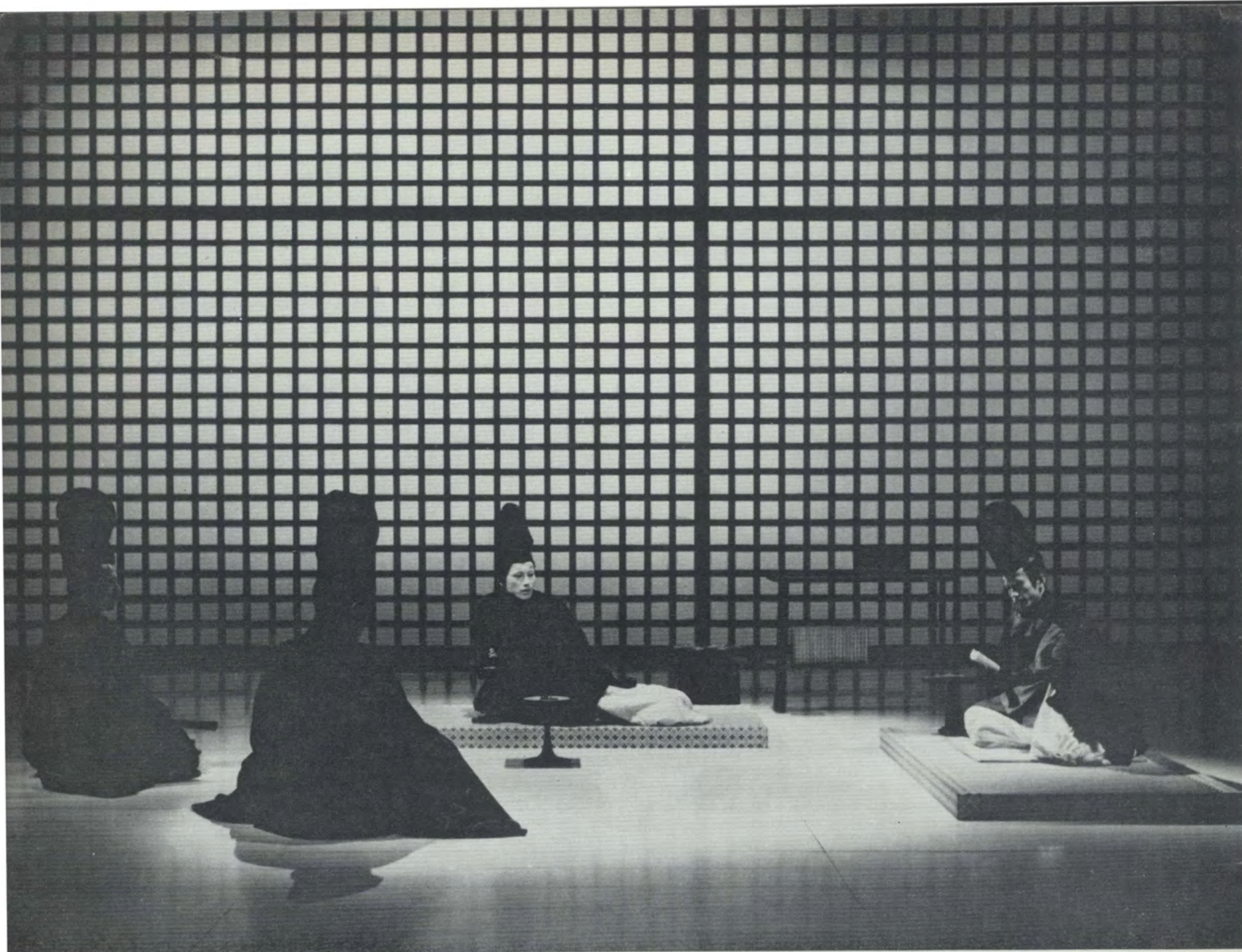
HOW DID YOU LEARN?

CLARK: "By experience. One can't learn to cut by example, or by analysing other people's work, or by watching over other people's shoulders. It's not until the stuff is running through your fingers that you can learn to put the magic in it."

HARVEY: "By looking back on earlier films I've edited. There is a tendency, when you first start editing, to cut too quickly, to be afraid of holding shots . . . When I first started cutting, I found it was one hell of a strain. I used to wake up at about three in the morning having dreamt of the film for what seemed like the last three hours. Then I'd write down notes of what I'd been dreaming about, editing notes . . . in fact, I still do. When one has been on a film for about nine months, it goes through one's mind like a gramophone record that's stuck and you can't switch it off. You sit in a theatre day after day and it goes through your head, the same dialogue, the same cuts, the same rhythms. I could probably go through the entire dialogue of *Spy* from beginning to end at the moment, but in a few months time it will have gone . . ."

CLARK: "I find I tend to see life through a moviola, and even in daily life I split things up into cuts as a matter of course. All my dreams are fully edited . . . and well edited, too! I wish I could say the same for all my films."

*As can be seen from the extract opposite, the actual dialogue differs slightly from the shooting script.



Donald
Richie

THE
SEVERAL
SIDES
OF



KON ICHIKAWA

ICHIKAWA AT FIFTY is a spare man with large black-frame glasses, a gap between his teeth which invariably lodges a cigarette, an enormous number of anecdotes and a multiplicity of boyish gestures. He looks very much like one of the caricatures of himself that he occasionally draws.

"I'm still a cartoonist and I think that the greatest influence on my films (besides Chaplin, particularly *The Gold Rush*) is probably Disney." He likes other films, Renoir's *The River* is an especial favourite, and, more recently, *Hiroshima, Mon Amour*. "But there is a lot of Disney in me—it's just that my subjects are different."

His first picture was animated. The 18-year-old Ichikawa entered the J.O. cartoon department after graduation from an Osaka commercial school and in 1946 completed *Dojoji Musume*, a puppet-film based on a famous Kabuki dance. The Occupation authorities, concerned with discovering "feudal remnants," seized the negative and it has never been found. After that, Ichikawa joined Toho and began making "another kind of cartoon," a series of satirical comedies of which *Pu-San* (itself based on a famous comic strip) is probably the best. Until his fortieth year Ichikawa was something like a miniature Preston Sturges, a small-time Billy Wilder, not nearly so good as either but funny enough at times.

There is another side to Ichikawa. Animation stops, the funny stories cease, and he simply sits, cigarette dangling, his eyes large and sad behind his glasses. This is the Ichikawa who in 1955 made *The Burmese Harp*, and went on to complete his best pictures. "*Burma*—oh, but I wanted to make that film. That was the first film I really felt I had to make." This story of a Japanese soldier who stays behind after the war to bury the dead moved many of the director's generation when it first appeared as a novel. "It said something simple and true about the difficulty of living, and I was beginning to find out just how difficult that is." In 1956 he read Mishima's *The Temple of the Golden Pavilion*, and it "seemed to me to express perfectly the 'pain of our age.' I thought that here was something I could make which would really be all mine." *Enjo* (*Conflagration*), based on this novel, is still his favourite among his films, and one of the reasons is that "this picture marked the end of the change that was taking place in me."

* * *

The jump from comedy to tragedy—particularly in Japan—is not as wide as commonly supposed, and one can reach comedy through tragedy (Kurosawa) or tragedy through comedy (Ichikawa), the latter turning from the most satirical of comedies to the most painful of analyses. "I had become aware that men are unhappy. You can even say that they are in anguish and so the only way to show a real man is to show an unhappy one. Oh, I look around for some kind of humanism but I never seem to find it. People are always complaining, the ending of the Olympic film is an example—why show all that strain and pain, they say. And they want happy endings too. But doesn't this desire for a happy ending show how unhappy they really are?"

This anguish, this pain of our age, has in the past ten years become the theme of Ichikawa's finest pictures. (Something he himself denies, saying: "I don't have any unifying theme—I just make any picture I like or any that the company tells me to do.") And his interest in man-in-anguish has made him long want to film Camus' *L'Etranger*, and is responsible for his living in France several years ago, working with Robbe-Grillet on a script which the company—Daiei—finally turned down. In *Enjo* the anguish results in the destruction of the pavilion; in *Fires on the Plain* in the "suicide" of the hero; in *Ten Dark Women*, in the painfully comic dilemma of the trapped hero; and in *The Sin*, the refusal of love.

Ichikawa's interest in this theme is so extreme that it finds expression even in those pictures which the company told him to make and in which he had little initial interest. The young man in *Bonchi** is securely caught, and *Alone on the*

*He is the scion of a rich merchant family, ruled over by a matriarchal grandmother who is determined that he must marry and produce a daughter so that the family power can be kept on the female side. Unfortunately his wife—and, subsequently, mistresses—produce only sons.

Pacific is a darker and more honest film because the anguish is there. Even his current work, a twenty-six part TV serialisation of *The Tale of Genji*, insists upon the unhappiness of Heian times.

Ichikawa's sense of anguish has caused him endless difficulties with those—motion picture companies in particular—who insist that life is fun and humanity happy. He has got into some kind of troubles with every company he has ever worked for, and particularly serious were those with Daiei's Masaichi Nagata (Japan's L. B. Mayer, and the man who walked out of the screening of his own *Rashomon*) who, to punish the director of *Kagi*, insisted that he make the blockbuster *The Great Wall of China*. Ichikawa refused and was suspended. Relations between the two strained to the snapping point, and then, in the local uproar over the Olympic picture (the committee had wanted a straight newsreel), they snapped.

"Of course, there is another reason for my troubles," says Ichikawa. "Any director who is any good has to be an absolutist. Like Kurosawa. Both of us fight like anything to get what we want and that is why we both have the same reputation with the film companies. You know—unco-operative, stubborn, wasteful, etc."

Ichikawa sees that he has made "two kinds of films" in his career. Those that are light and more funny than not ("my Disney side"), and those that are not. He would divide them this way:

LIGHT	DARK
* <i>Pu-San</i> (Mr. Poo)	* <i>The Burmese Harp</i>
* <i>Hanahiraku</i>	* <i>Nihonbashi</i>
* <i>The Men of Tohoko</i>	* <i>Kokoro</i> (The Heart)
* <i>Her Brother</i>	* <i>Punishment Room</i>
<i>Ten Dark Women</i>	* <i>Enjo</i> (Conflagration)
* <i>Being Two Isn't Easy</i>	* <i>Fires on the Plain</i>
* <i>The Revenge of Yuki-no-Jo</i>	* <i>Kagi</i> (The Key)
<i>Money Talks</i>	<i>Bonchi</i>
* <i>Alone on the Pacific</i>	* <i>The Sin</i>
<i>Tokyo Olympiad</i>	<i>The Tale of Genji</i>

The Disney side is seen in the sentiment of *Being Two Isn't Easy*, a study of life as seen by a 2-year-old child which even boasts some Disney-style animation; in the good-natured uproar of the gangster film *Money Talks*; and in the astonishing pop-art aspect of *Yuki-no-Jo*—a film which might be compared to a *Captain January* directed by Luis Buñuel. The darker, anguished side is clearly reflected in the claustrophobia of *Kokoro*, *Kagi*, and *Bonchi*, the paranoia of *The Sin*, the frightening schizoid beauty of *Enjo*. The sides overlap, of course. The comic fate of the man in *Ten Dark Women*, of the entire cast of *Kagi*—this is laughable but is none the less serious.

Ichikawa, incidentally, denies that *Kagi* was intended as black comedy. "When I finished the book, I thought, well the novel is ended, now the story would begin. So in the film I simply went on and finished the story. It isn't supposed to be funny and no one in Japan thought it was. I suppose the difficulty is that the story is about sex and, I must say, the Japanese don't know very much about that subject. Oh, we understand it enough intellectually but you don't find sex and society related in any kind of way. Take *A Streetcar Named Desire*, now that is a real socio-cultural indictment of America in meaningful sexual terms. In Japan something like that comes out very literally and we show them copulating. And that is the reason that sex comes off so badly in Japanese pictures; it doesn't have any real meaning to us. A film like *The Silence* is just meaningless to us. Anyway, in *Kagi* I wanted to make the point that the uninteresting thing about sex and society in Japan is that there can never be any kind of solution, and killing them all off was one way of doing it."

Ichikawa has said that sex can only be sex in Japan and consequently doesn't interest him—perhaps for that reason sexual references in his pictures tend to be oblique and relatively mysterious: the sexual tangle in *Ten Dark Women*,

Films marked with an asterisk will, it is hoped, be included in the season of Ichikawa films due at the National Film Theatre later this summer.

the homosexual implications of sections of *Enjo* and *Yuki-no-Jo*, even the celebrated rape scene in *Punishment Room*. Sex must carry with it a further meaning before he becomes interested in it. "But that is the way I am about everything. If possible, everything in my films has to be about something else, it has to have a wider relevance than itself. I'm rather like a novelist that way."

Ichikawa tends to like novelists (Gide, Ogai Mori) for whom "everything is about something else." He also makes more adaptations from novels than almost any other Japanese director (among his recent films only *Being Two Isn't Easy* and *Tokyo Olympiad* are 'originals'), and has occasionally referred to himself as an 'illustrator.' In this he is somewhat like David Lean (there are other parallels as well: a taste for irony, a predilection for specifically moral dilemmas) rather than his 'favourite' director Jean Renoir. His method of illustrating, however, is quite different from most directors.

"When I know what I want to do then I sit down and study it, for months. I have to digest the whole thing, or live the whole thing before it will come out as a film." Ichikawa almost invariably works with his wife, Nato Wada. "We usually read a book we like or are given a book the company has bought, or a story or something, and we both read it carefully and then we start to work. But the work isn't sitting down and writing, it's—well, it's sort of like living with it, bringing it into the house as though it were a pet or a child. We are very close and we communicate through good-mornings and what-do-you-want-for-suppers and the script gets done page by page, a word here, a sentence there, without our thinking too much about it. It is she who finally sits down and writes it all up. Then if there is something I don't agree with we can talk some more. But I usually agree: after all, it is just what we said it would be. Her influence is absolutely crucial, I think. Without her there wouldn't be any Ichikawa film. She says no, says I am the kind of director who transforms everything, and when the film is done she can seldom see any of her own work in it."

Though her influence is indeed crucial (and an amount of darkness in the "dark" films may come from her), Ichikawa's taking the script and sitting down at his desk for the next several weeks, visualising the entire picture, is indeed a transforming process. He spends his time drawing pictures, determining camera angles and scene length, planning movement, and editing in his head, because: "The way we work there just isn't time for that once you get started on a film. I'd like to work the way that Kurosawa can because he has his own company—lots of rehearsals with everyone knowing just what they are going to do before a frame is taken. But you can't do that if you are working for a film company. There is a kind of rehearsal and then you take it and the director has to be in there knowing exactly what he wants. Sometimes I've improvised but nothing good ever came of that."

"Speaking of that, however, I learned a lot on the Olympic

film. I knew where all the cameras were going to be, but I didn't know what was going to happen in front of them. And I discovered that accidental drama discloses itself when you've not made up your mind about it. All the best stuff in the picture is absolutely fortuitous and I could never have imagined it. From now on I'm going to take some advantage of this. I'm starting *Hey, Buddy!* with my own company [and in collaboration with Steve Parker, a Tokyo impresario, Shirley MacLaine's husband] and I'm not going to tell the actors when the camera is on and when it isn't. They won't know and so maybe I can get things out of them that they don't know about."

"The other reason that I try to visualise everything is that I'm the kind of person who has to see something—even in my own imagination—before I understand it. I started as a painter and I still think like one. That is why the camera is so important to me. I plan all the set-ups and I always check the framing, and I usually try to work with someone I know and like, a cameraman such as Kazuo Miyagawa [who did *Bonchi* and *Enjo* and *Kagi*, as well as *Rashomon*, *Ugetsu* and Ozu's *Ukigusa*] or Jyuichi Nagano [a discovery of Susumu Hani's, who was cameraman on the Olympic film and will shoot *Hey, Buddy!*]. I design the sets too, usually—it was fun doing the *Genji* ones—and I'd probably do the music too if I could. I don't know much about music but I'm thinking of going to school and learning."

One of the results of this intense visualisation is what has come to be known in the industry as "the Ichikawa look." It owes much less to traditional art than it does to modern graphic design. The angular pattern is usually bold, the balance is almost always asymmetrical, the framing is precise, and yet the composition rarely calls attention to itself. Here the "cartoon" influence is seen strongly, not specifically Disney but those animated films (UPA was an early example) which were designed by graphic artists. A now celebrated example is that extremely long scene of the family conference in *Kagi* which is all one cut, balance and composition so cunningly poised that there is always something new to look at. Equally typical are the figure placements before and after the beautifully controlled flashbacks in *Enjo*, which both complement each other and are, at the same time, quite different.

All of this, the entire visualisation of the film, is the product of Ichikawa all alone at his desk, digesting the film he is going to produce, bringing together the various sides of his nature to focus upon a specific scene in a specific film. "People are always surprised at my humour and then they are always surprised at the bleakness of whatever philosophy I have. To me they seem perfectly complementary. All sides of a person add up to that person, you know. Somebody called the Olympic picture a 'hymn to life,' and that I guess is what I am about. I'm only guessing though. I can't define it any better than I have in my films. After all, a director only has his films to talk with. If he doesn't get through then he hasn't made the film very well or it hasn't been looked at very well."

"THE SIN".





THOMAS L'IMPOSTEUR

Tom Milne

THOMAS L'IMPOSTEUR OPENS with a scene which does not figure in Cocteau's novel: a ball given by the Princesse de Bormes as a last defiant gesture in a Paris deserted by a prudent *haute société* in the path of the advancing German army. Pesquel-Duport, the newspaper owner hopelessly in love with the Princesse, watches despairingly as she gives a bravura performance of insouciance, crying "Mais, j'aime Schubert" while the guests huddle in corners muttering ominously about Germanophiles, and an orchestra of lady musicians churns out the waltzes with maidenly serenity.

The ball, beautifully described by the Princesse herself in another happy non-Cocteau invention as "un fantôme de bal," is an overture to the world in process of disintegration which she will shortly discover. A phantom world becomes peopled by phantoms as the sixteen-year-old Guillaume Thomas appears out of nowhere, bearing an assumed name as "nephew of the Général de Fontenoy" which is an open sesame to the permits and passes necessary before the Princesse can lead her strange, shambling convoy of improvised ambulances to the Aladdin's Cave of the battlefield.

Both she and Guillaume expect to find a treasure of romance, heroism and adventure, while her daughter Henriette ("Clémence était née actrice, sa fille spectatrice, et son spectacle favori était sa mère") finds her treasure in watching them, loving the ghost of her mother's gaiety and the ghost of Thomas himself. Though deception awaits them—the discovery of death and mutilation—their dreams live on.

When Guillaume Thomas acts out his last fantasy on the battlefield, and a bullet smashes into his chest so that he dies, "in him, fiction and reality become one." His phantom becomes real, and a new, darker myth is born, in which neither Guillaume, nor the Princesse, nor Henriette ever discovers the truth of his empty, futile death.

Cocteau's idea of war and war work may, as Gide unkindly suggested, have been of doing little patriotic dances on café table-tops in a borrowed military cap *pour encourager les autres* (in fact, like Thomas l'Imposteur, he joined an ambulance unit and went to the front), but his vision has a kind of truth and honesty lacking in many more highly respected outcries against the iniquities of war. Never ashamed of his own aestheticism, Cocteau looked at war aesthetically; and it is an uncomfortable fact that while the *next* war always looms up as a horror too unspeakable to contemplate, the wars of the past evoke a much more complex mixture of feelings, comprising nostalgia, fascination, and controlled horror.

When one watches the newsreel records of the First World War, what strikes one first and foremost is the marvellous *mise en scène* which turns reality almost into fantasy. The BBC's *Great War* series, for instance, had a nightmare surrealism which few films could rival: whole woods mown down by shellfire, leaving nothing but a jagged waste of raw stumps; seething battlefields of mud in which strange shapes slowly drag themselves about and stiffened corpses lie rotting

like figures from Rodin's "Gate of Hell"; horses looming out of the mist in gasmask-like creatures of the Apocalypse; or, more strangely still, a cavalry unit suddenly rounding the point of a wood with all pennants flying like extras from some extravagant medieval spectacle. The horror is there of course, in the futility and misery and barbarity of it all, but inextricably mingled with the fascination.

* * *

It is this fascination which Cocteau captured so remarkably in his novel, and which Franju has made visual with such meticulous exactness. The whole film has a mournful, dream-like beauty which, like Cocteau's imagery, has a double cutting-edge. During the visit to Rheims in the midst of a fierce bombardment, Guillaume runs in exhilaration through the explosions, past houses gnawed by fire into empty shells, watching in amazement as the Cathedral disappears into a shroud of smoke and burning masonry, until he comes across the Princesse, trembling against a wall and staring in horror at the dead bodies of a woman and her child. The contradictory emotions aroused by the bombardment (its spectacle and its horrors) are beautifully distinguished here, and equally beautifully brought together as the nonplussed Guillaume listens to the Princesse begging to be taken away.

For if the Princesse begins to grasp the reality of war, Guillaume remains safely wrapped in his dreams: she gazes in terror at the mutilated men being prodded by a medical orderly with a pitchfork to see which of them is alive enough to be worth saving, while Thomas, happily playing with his revolver, fires at his own image in an abandoned mirror and is delighted by the gunfire which answers from the horizon. (This mirror-shooting, and the fantastic Red Cross fête which mirrors the war in its grotesque display of toy trenches and observation posts for the benefit of children and old ladies, are Franju inventions which would surely have delighted Cocteau.) The same ambivalence appears in the extraordinary lunar landscape of the final sequences: the desolate emptiness of the sea-trenches among the sand-dunes on the Belgian coast. Here, amid the pale mists rolling off the sea, life suddenly intrudes as enthusiastic actors declaim the Marseillaise from an improvised stage lit by car headlamps, and visiting ladies are taken on a tour of inspection of the front through a tiny angle of gaunt forest lit by flashing guns. "A travers ce parc de feu et de tonnerre, il se promenait, ravi." As he embarks on his first and last mission, out in the strange mists and livid light of falling flares in no-man's land, Guillaume is delighted

EMMANUELE RIVA, SOPHIE DARES, JEAN SERVAIS, FABRICE ROULEAU (THE PRINCESS, HER DAUGHTER, PESQUEL-DUPOURT AND THOMAS).



to find that his dream exists, that war is real: he stops like a child to wonder at the watch still ticking on a dead man's wrist, and is shot dead by a German patrol.

Throughout the film, Franju illustrates Cocteau perfectly, only occasionally being trapped into over-simplification by a desire to remain faithful to his original, as in the sequence where Guillaume and Captain Roy listen in silence to the wind humming in the telegraph wires. Cocteau explains that, as a Breton, Roy superstitiously believes that the humming wires—and their echo in the wailing pipes of a passing Algerian military band—are the distressed soul of the comrade for whose death he feels responsible. It would have been easy for Franju to explain in a line of dialogue; but he has preferred to respect the silence, and leave the scene to convey simply a vague melancholy and unease. Certain subtleties in the book are missing, of course, notably the suggestion that Pesquel-Duport, in loving the Princesse, is just as much in love with a phantom as Henriette ("On ne pouvait saisir Clémence. Elle glissait, se retournait, s'évaporait. Il la sentait irréelle, sans masse...").

More often, though, as with *Thérèse Desqueyroux*, it is Franju's ability to enlarge, while remaining completely faithful, that astonishes. In the sequence with the soldier who is about to have his leg amputated without chloroform when a bomb kills the surgeon and his aides, for instance, Cocteau simply describes how no one dared to approach him again: "On dut laisser la gangrène l'envahir comme le lierre une statue." Franju takes up the image of the statue overgrown with ivy, and shows the soldier trapped by heaps of rubble and a beam which has fallen across his bed to make a cage in which he becomes an easy prey.

Elsewhere, Franju makes his film even more Cocteau-esque by quotations from Cocteau's films—a shot from the Princesse's car of a dark, deserted road as she nears the front, which recalls the entry into "La Zone" of that other Princess in *Orphée*—and a charming gag when the mysterious light flashing on and off in the ambulance convoy turns out to be Edith Scob playing at being an illuminated Madonna. In the original, it was Dr. Verne's mistress who sat in the car, illuminating her own angelic face, but in the film, Dr. Verne's part has been so cut that the scene is meaningless except as a private joke from Franju to Cocteau.*

Having already acquired the household gods of Cocteau's films (Edouard Dermithe playing Captain Roy, and Jean Marais delivering the commentary—beautifully), Franju adds his own favourite actress (with the bonus of disquieting overtones of pain and victimisation from her roles in *Les Yeux sans Visage*, *Thérèse*, *Judex*).

* * *

Nevertheless, *Thomas l'Imposteur* remains a Franju film first and foremost, with a fantasy distinguished from Cocteau's by its cruelty (in Artaud's sense of having the power to shock). In spite of Cocteau's hatred of *le flou poétique*—"Plus on touche au mystère, plus il importe d'être réaliste"—by comparison his vision is soft. Death, for him, may mean being rudely knocked down by roaring motor-cycles at the behest of an icy Princess, but in Franju, it has the tangible, sickening thud of a scalpel sinking deep into human flesh (*Les Yeux sans Visage*—the murder of Valli). In Cocteau's novel, Guillaume does not hear the shot which kills him, but feels an "atroce coup de bâton sur la poitrine." In the film we hear the shot, and are left to sense, vividly, the "atroce coup," the pain which in Franju's universe is as tangible as a wall which blocks one's path. There is an interesting passage in an interview with Franju (*Cahiers du Cinéma*, 101) which illuminates his very individual use of buildings. His windows, in particular, are unique, almost cut out of the surrounding light or darkness as though they were cages concealing some terrible secret:

"J'avoue d'ailleurs être beaucoup plus sensible au scénique qu'au dynamique. J'étais très petit quand j'ai vu

* Metaphorically speaking, of course, as the film was not started until after Cocteau's death. But Franju had been waiting to make it for 12 years, since Cocteau gave him the novel after seeing *Le Sang des Bêtes* and *Hôtel des Invalides*. "It is by you I'd like to be betrayed."



EDOUARD DERMITHE (THE BRETON CAPTAIN) AND FABRICE ROULEAU.

pour la première fois, après une incendie, une façade d'immeuble et rien derrière. La vision m'est restée d'une chose très artificielle et très insolite. Une façade et rien derrière . . . Qu'est-ce-qu'il y avait avant? C'est le vide hanté."

Le vide hanté, a haunted void, perfectly describes the world which both Guillaume Thomas and the Princesse gaily set out to discover, and the ball scene of the opening sequence ends with an ominous reminder of what lies ahead: as the guests take their departure, the camera tracks in to the window, which remains a black, sightless frame for an interminable moment, until finally a light snaps on outside to reveal Pesquel-Duport, carefully wrapped-up and ready to venture into the night. One wonders what Franju might make of another Cocteau novel, *Les Enfants Terribles*, where the reality which once lay outside "La Chambre" gradually withdraws inside, until it becomes the only reality which the children know and recognise. It is here, in drawing the distinction between inside and outside, between the truth and the reality of a dream, that Franju in my opinion surpasses Cocteau, evoking the image of war as a monstrous beast ("Elle mange salement . . . grignote . . .") lying in wait to begin its task of destruction.

Cocteau describes, vividly and exactly, Guillaume's situation as an imposter who is drawn like a moth to destroy himself in pursuit of a dream; but he does not—or cannot*—evoke the visions which Guillaume sees and which urge him irresistibly on. Franju can, and does: the cathedral sinking like a torpedoed ship in a billowing wake of smoke and crumbling masonry; two cavalry officers riding proudly by through the deserted countryside; a stray bullet winging out

of the night to lodge in a face momentarily picked out by the light of a torch; a horse careering through a burning town with its mane ablaze; a mirror shattered by a bullet while Guillaume's own image still stares calmly back at him; a row of trees with their flaming branches gradually shrivelling into black skeletons; in fact, all the stark, strangely disturbing landscapes thrown up by war and seized by Marcel Fradetal's superb camerawork, and which can be seen in two ways—for their horror or for their fantasy. Like one of Franju's beloved doves, Guillaume hovers at the bars of his cage, tempted by the magic and mystery of the world outside into obliviousness of the hunter's gun.

There is one other curious difference between novel and film. *Thomas l'Imposteur* is written in Cocteau's typically lapidary, imagistic style, where large sections of essential story are conveyed in a few sentences—the whole history of the Princesse's birth, upbringing, marriage and widowhood, on which the tale is based, takes less than 400 words—and with the true conciseness of poetry. He tells us everything we need to know about Guillaume, after his meeting with the German patrol, in three short, superb paragraphs:

"Une balle, se dit-il. Je suis perdu si je ne fais semblant d'être mort.

Mais en lui, la fiction et la réalité ne formaient qu'un. Guillaume Thomas était mort."

It is all the more surprising that, after this, Cocteau continues with a (comparatively) lengthy description of how Pesquel-Duport breaks the news to Guillaume's aunt, and how Mme. Valiche revenges herself for some supposed slights by rushing to get in first with the news to the Princesse and Henriette. Franju cuts all of this, as well as Pesquel-Duport's renewed efforts to persuade the Princesse to marry him, leaving only the brief description of Henriette's death ("Elle mourut deux mois après d'une maladie nerveuse qui n'était pas mortelle. C'est dire que, malgré les précautions, elle s'empoisonna"), and of the Marine cemetery built like a ship at the edge of the sea where a cross bears the legend, "Guillaume Thomas de Fontenoy. Mort pour nous." Franju, in fact, renders unto Cocteau his own poetry.

* The only Cocteau film which reminds one, visually, of *Thomas l'Imposteur* is *Orphée*, particularly the sequences in "La Zone de la Mort." It is interesting to note that Christian Bérard was to have designed special sets, but died before his sketches were complete. Rather than replace Bérard by another designer, Cocteau simply found, and used, the ruins of St. Cyr barracks just outside Paris (where, in fact, some of *Thomas* was shot).

FILM REVIEWS

VIVA MARIA

BY ALL THE ODDS, one feels, *Viva Maria* (United Artists) ought to have been a terrible fiasco. There is the unbreakable cinema rule that no film which tries to make a virtue of trick casting ever rises above the level of its trick; and the rule that European directors ought to beware of Central American locations, sombreros and haciendas; and that any film which sets out to look carefree but extravagant is bound to end up with all its expensive staging showing. All good rules, most of which *Viva Maria* manages cheerfully to break. Perhaps one reckoned without the resilience, powers of self-projection, or sheer instinct for creative survival of the people mainly concerned. And perhaps, too, one forgot a certain geniality which allows the French to cast off cares and grand manners which other people merely pretend to discard.

There is a splendid moment in *Viva Maria* during a scene which finds Brigitte Bardot accidentally inventing striptease for an audience of enchanted Mexicans. With her dress falling in tatters around her, Bardot turns for advice on how to proceed to her senior partner, Jeanne Moreau. Continue (with the act), orders Moreau with steely professionalism. But Bardot, of course, continues with the undressing. And Moreau turns on her a look of baffled amusement, a sophisticate's gleeful reaction to the unexpected, which suddenly and startlingly suggests that the actress really is doing it for fun.

The trick in the casting is to introduce Moreau (Maria I) as the initiate in sex and seduction, and Bardot (Maria II) as the eager novice whose real passion is for pistols and dynamite. Moreau gets the film's only love scene that could pass for remotely serious; both of them share a sequence in which, prisoners of a tyrannical political boss, they move around him in circles, advancing and retreating, presenting him with a double image so overpowering in its seductive menace that their captor's reason visibly totters. Here, momentarily, Louis Malle hints at something that his film might have been about: the two personalities overlapping and fusing, the two halves of some formidable whole.

This scarcely, however, gets beyond a hint.

Viva Maria is not a film to be lingered over on these terms, but to be enjoyed on the casual, picaresque, throwaway level at which it presents itself. Before the credits, there are a series of almighty bangs: the infant Maria O'Malley blowing up Dublin Castle, Scotland Yard and the Rock of Gibraltar in alliance with her Irish anarchist father. Tripping across a Corot landscape, the child is delicately unravelling a length of fuse wire. All of which leads her to Central America, partnership with Maria I in a touring circus which pays a distant tribute to *Lola Montès*, and involvement in revolution, that inescapable Central American activity.

There is a passage around the centre of the film where the script (by Malle and Jean-Claude Carrière) hovers dangerously on the verge of taking itself seriously. The revolutionary leader, whom Maria I meets in his prison-cell, is played by George Hamilton with a hang-dog melancholy which means that all the panache has to come from Moreau. Before he is shot, the film slithers towards quicksands of explanation: suggestions that the Mexican extras are suddenly to be taken as real oppressed peasantry, the revolution not as a joke but as a cause, and so on. This the tempo can't stand; and fortunately doesn't have to for too long. Moreau's version of Mark Antony's funeral oration, declaimed *fortissimo* over her lover's corpse; her total inability to translate words into actions (Bardot has to snap the safety-catch off her gun); and Bardot's Tarzan leaps and swings in her one-woman attack on an enemy strong-point, restore the equilibrium. In fact, the justification for the mass slaughter, with the two Marias (now prayed to as "Ave Maria et Maria") traversing their conquered territory on a stolen railway engine, is that none of the bullets is meant to hurt.

Malle can't resist an effect; and in the inconsequential circumstances of this film, he doesn't have to. During one of the revolutionary battles, he has the camera high on a hillside, while the rebels advance laterally in waves across its field of vision. The shot is vertiginously angled—so consciously so, indeed, that one feels the man who set it up

could hardly bear the pain of having to cut away from it. While Bardot swings through the trees, the bullets bring down showers of prettily coloured petals; when revolution comes, it's in the form of a rain of gold coins descending from a bombed bank; and when the enemy leader cowers in his palace, one's main impression is of the chocolate-soldier glitter of his uniform.

All this random prettiness, as Henri Decaë's camera caressingly records it, is not a distraction from something else; it becomes the reason for the film, along with its wayward jokes. The Inquisition is still around, with all its mumbo-jumbo of black cowls and thumbscrews; but the Inquisitors have rather forgotten how the thumbscrews work, and their dungeon is fitted out with telephones and a typewriter. Anachronism jokes, to my mind, very rarely come off: if this one does, it is because the film is so off-hand about it. Bardot's unbridled delight at the sight of a machine-gun—"Oh, c'est le nouveau Vickers"—is a moment of supreme incongruity played off against the casting. Moreau has a no less fine moment when she holds a press conference, leading the journalists through trails of fuse wire, and explaining that her intentions towards the United States are entirely pacific, and that no invasion is contemplated. In a small part, Paulette Dubost is very handy and cheerful, as a circus performer who takes to dynamiting with unnerving alacrity.

Some of Malle's inventions are merely irritating, like the Grand Inquisitor seen at the end with his shot-off head held in his hands. Some are damaged by maladroitness, like the joke about the man catapulted by an explosion on to a metal horse, and left flogging it wildly after his companions have charged off without him. In fact, there are moments in the film when one might accuse Malle himself of belabouring a few dead horses—echoes of other films, debts to assorted directors which he has not been able fully to pay off in kind: to Ophüls, Renoir again for greasepaint and circuses, the American musical, the Marx Brothers.

Whatever he is, however, Malle seems essentially an eclectic in temperament as well

"VIVA MARIA": BRIGITTE BARDOT, JEANNE MOREAU.



as in styles. *Le Feu Follet* was a kind of suicide note from an eclectic: its doomed hero was prepared to try anything, except that he could find nothing worth trying more than once. *Viva Maria* is the reverse of the coin: try anything, and like it. The effect may be one of engagingly total artificiality, like a rococo folly constructed out of ice-cream. But if there is ever any danger of the film actually melting away as one watches, Malle has his built-in double insurance: *viva*, in fact, *Maria et Maria*.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

LA TOSCA

UNTIL IT WAS SHOWN RECENTLY—in the interests of completeness—as part of the National Film Theatre's Renoir season, *La Tosca* was something of a ghost film. Abandoned by Renoir in 1940 when Italy entered the war, and completed by his assistant Carl Koch, it seems to have been a wartime casualty, remembered mainly in a few devoted references by *Cahiers du Cinéma* and as the film in which Renoir never got further than the first five shots.

In fact it turns out to be interesting on several counts, not least the fact that it is an all-important link in the chain of Italian influences which, after the American interlude, turned the pre-war Renoir of *La Règle du Jeu* into the post-war Renoir of *Le Carrosse d'Or*. Rude Romantic attack, in the unprincipled *Commedia dell'Arte* liberties of Marivaux, gives way to the classical quiescence of Vivaldi; and the path leads through *La Tosca* and the operatic grandeur of the baroque, where extravagance is reduced to order by firmness of line.

The first five shots, unquestionably Renoir's, are also the best part of the film. As a huge gateway swings open and two horsemen gallop out to disappear into the night, the camera retires into the city, circling gracefully round a monument to pick them up as they proceed through the deserted streets, hovering by a fountain as they emerge into a square, then tracking gently along a statue-lined alleyway as they arrive at Scarpia's palace. Here, the baroque statuary of Rome is inextricably linked to the emotions of the film, working in much the same way as Visconti's *Senso* to underline the real solidity, as well as the operatic extravagance, of the proud fight for liberty and the star-crossed love of Tosca and Cavaradossi which end in execution at dawn. (It is interesting, in fact, to reflect that Visconti, who collaborated on the script with Renoir and Koch, was following Renoir's development at a few years' remove. With *Ossessione*, he looks back to the pre-war Renoir of *La Bête Humaine*; *Senso* obviously recalls the lesson of *Tosca*; and one might even make a case for *Vaghe Stelle dell'Orsa* as following the same line to chamber opera as *Le Carrosse d'Or*.)

After these opening shots, the temperature drops slightly as Koch takes over; but the film has a unity of conception which suggests that Koch followed Renoir's treatment very closely. Human beings offset by architecture: the stone archways and lowering corridors of the castle where political prisoners await their sentence; the crenellated turrets and battlements of the roof glistening in the early morning mist where executions take place against a panorama of Rome; the imposing façade and lustrous

interiors of the palace where Scarpia has his audience of the Queen, and where Tosca is seen trapped within the stripes of the carpet stretching along an endless corridor; the glittering church where Angelotti finds betrayal as well as shelter; the melancholy Gothic ruin which watches over Cavaradossi's country retreat. Emotions flutter vainly against immovable stone, punctuated by the endless, precise manoeuvrings of the firing squad.

Technically speaking, *La Tosca* is not a film of the opera (the orchestral score is used intermittently as an accompaniment to the action, while the arias are sung off-stage, as it were), but an operatic film which amplifies its characters through camera movements which rhyme their emotions with the grandeur of their surroundings. In the church sequence, Koch brings this off magnificently with a superb slow crane shot (accompanying the aria "Recondita armonia", sung off) which circles round the church from the scaffolding where Cavaradossi is painting Angelotti's sister, moves down to frame her kneeling in front of the chapel where her brother is hiding, then rises vertically once again to Cavaradossi watching from the scaffolding. Here the camera movement, operatic in itself, gathers up the three characters and their emotions into a perfect equivalent of the baroque line of the church.

Later, during Cavaradossi's final aria as he awaits execution ("E lucevan le stelle", also sung off), Koch tries for the same effect, this time a trifle self-consciously. Here, enclosed by shots of Cavaradossi against the bars of his cell, the montage of shots of guards silhouetted against the sky and battlements tends to look less like a cinematic equivalent of an aria than a slightly laboured metaphor.

Even so, Koch manages to fill the film with a wealth of incidental felicities which Renoir could hardly have bettered: the ironic pan up to the angel with the sword gazing blandly down on the place of execution; Tosca hovering timidly on the very edge of the frame as she waits for Cavaradossi's execution, tremulously disappearing and reappearing as the officer-in-charge makes his report; two calm overhead shots of the *Te Deum* procession moving slowly through the church and back again as Cavaradossi and Angelotti make their flurried escape with Scarpia's men in hot pursuit; the sudden, impulsive track forward as Tosca jumps to her death over the battlements, which leaves one faced with the impassive, eternal skyline of Rome; the marvellously venomous (and very Renoir) wit of Scarpia's interview with the Queen, in which she firmly indicates that his head is at stake if he does not discover the conspirators while offering some petulantly regal advice as to how to eat his ice-cream.

The magnificence of Renoir's conception is unmistakable, and makes *La Tosca* a film which deserves to be better known. It is all the more pity, therefore, that Koch's *proxime accessit* execution is let down by his handling of the actors. Michel Simon, playing Scarpia quietly as a chillingly cold fish with an edge of sympathy (as always with Renoir, he has his reasons) is fine; and Rossano Brazzi's Cavaradossi will pass as a conventional *jeune premier*. The unfortunate weakness lies with Imperio Argentina's Tosca: where one needs the steely brilliance and controlled depths of a Maria Casarès, one gets . . . a prima donna.

TOM MILNE



"LA TOSCA" IN PRODUCTION.

PARIS VU PAR

RECIPE: TAKE SIX DIRECTORS, three who have 'made it' (Rouch, Chabrol, Godard), three who haven't yet (Eric Rohmer, Jean-Daniel Pollet, Jean Douchet). Ask them to pick an *arrondissement* of Paris, and each construct a story around it, using Ektachrome and 16mm. and blowing it up to 35mm. for distribution. Result: a picture of Paris and the Parisians which I certainly wouldn't promote if I were French Minister of Tourism. Whatever the value of individual episodes in this package, the most striking thing about *Paris vu par* (Amanda) is the attitude that emerges towards themselves and their capital city. Paris is seen as a noisy, cramped, bogus, heartless mess; most of the characters in the film as either neurotic, ugly, weak, stupid or nasty. The prevailing rhythm of life in present-day Paris, according to this film, is irritability.

Douchet contributes a charmless, ill-made study of yet another American girl falling foul of the wiles of a Saint-Germain Adonis (who this time turns out to be a male model in a drawing academy, living on his wits and borrowing his friend's flat). The irony of the opening cultural tour of the *sixième* is too facile, the attempt to be quizzical falls flat. Rohmer examines a men's-wear salesman near the Etoile who is apparently going out of his mind because of the difficulty of crossing the boulevards and avenues emanating from the Arc de Triomphe, a journey further complicated by roadworks caused by Métro repairs similar in scale to the building of the Victoria Line. I can't see any other explanation of this silly story involving a street-fight with a *clochard*, umbrella-phobia, and several coy captions.

Pollet takes us into a seedy apartment in Saint-Denis where a sallow dishwasher has plucked up enough courage to bring home a huge tart for an evening of fun for which he is manifestly ill-equipped, psychologically

or physically. What follows is engaging enough, well acted, especially by the man, who has eyes like soulful poached eggs. But it rarely rises above a filmed revue sketch, complete with final blackout (there is a power cut as they finally get into bed), and descending to seaside postcard level in a routine where little man is too weak to uncork a bottle of wine, so muscular female obliges.

Rouch shows us, in one uninterrupted handheld take, the early morning squabbles of a young couple in a flat near the Gare du Nord rendered almost uninhabitable by the sound of pneumatic drills. The first part of this film is truthful and harsh, a convincing study of marital argument brought to high pitch by almost intolerable living conditions. The weaving and twisting of the camera catch the claustrophobia well, and there is a splendid moment when the girl expresses her dreams of escape by conjuring up the infinite possibilities offered by the alluring voices of Air France hostesses at Orly. But when the girl sweeps out of the flat and meets a handsome stranger, the film tips over into a women's magazine world. He walks along with her, asks her to fly away with him, and when she refuses climbs the railing and promptly commits suicide by jumping on to the railway tracks. Sociology and melodrama just don't mix.

Godard's episode is subtitled 'an action-film', and takes its style from the methods of an 'action-sculptor' who appears in the story. Godard's heroine, straight from the pages of *Elle*, thinks she has mixed up two express letters to her two lovers. Frantically she tries to claw them back out of the letter-box, but fails. So off she goes to try to sort things out with the two men. The first one is the action-sculptor, working in a studio strewn with road signs, rusty metal fragments, steel machine-parts. "Chance enters into my work," he says, "I weld things as they fall." And chance in fact is the theme of the story.

The girl, winding her sweet body in and out of the steel shapes, tries to soften the blow of the imminent letter, takes off her sweater, tries to win him round. But the sculptor is

wild with rage on discovering that she has been seeing someone else; he throws her out. She makes her way across to the other man, a motor mechanic who announces that bodywork is his religion. Again she goes through the same routine, twining herself round aerial and windscreen. The man seems surprised, but is equally angry on finding out that she has been involved with another man. He produces his letter, and she realises with horror that she hasn't mixed them up after all. But the damage has been done, and she's kicked out again. The moral of the story (which first appeared in *Une Femme est une Femme*, told by Brialy to Karina) is that there are some girls who are always wrong. This anecdote, filmed by Godard with all the lightness and deftness of a Molière entr'acte, is set in Montparnasse and Levallois, but really is a marginal essay in Godard's main work. As such it differs from the other items in this film: its impulse is more personal, less sociological.

The series is wound up by Chabrol's crude, vulgar and highly effective *grand guignol* about how a rich couple drive their young son to distraction, revolt, and escape. The scene is a plush flat in La Muette. Chabrol himself, as the gross gourmandising husband, always leching the blonde maid, and Stéphane Audran as the bitchy well-preserved wife, create domestic hell, which their son manages to endure by blocking his ears with wax plugs. As their arguing rises to a climax, he decides to make his protest felt. He skewers through the eyes a portrait of Adenauer on his father's table, pours his mother's perfume down the sink, and, casting a farewell glance at the body of his mother, who has fallen fatally downstairs after the climactic row, he leaves. The last we see of him is a small figure envired with neon, noise, and traffic. Chabrol has shot this sour story with slashing close-ups of porcine munching, and grotesque attention to the insulated unhappiness of the household. But the anger, like so much of the emotion in these episodes, seems close to self-hatred.

MICHAEL KUSTOW

THE WAR GAME

THE DEBATE ON THE WAR GAME has mainly been on the question of whether the BBC were right in refusing to broadcast it. Anyone who has been allowed to see the film is placed in a slightly false position: one of those supposedly responsible, privileged and educated few who are assumed to be beyond shock, corruption and demoralisation. Our heads are supposed to be firmly screwed on. It's that great mysterious, anonymous mass out there who are to be—what?—protected. Shock and demoralisation, in this case, would have been the object of the exercise. And the BBC, in deciding not to risk it, leaves it open to conjecture just what effect a TV programme like this could have had.

All this, in any case, has rather blurred the question of what *The War Game* actually is: what it looks like, how it works on the screen, and the questions it raises about the differences between film and television. I don't doubt that it would have looked more persuasive on 21 inches than it did on the National Film Theatre screen. Unlike Kevin Billington, a documentarist who works in TV but seems to think like a film man, Peter Watkins has made for television something which circumstances force us to view as a cinema film. And the gap between film and TV, so often assumed to be closing fast, has rarely looked wider.

Watkins uses a rapid but measured and impersonal commentary to tell us what is going on, as war escalates from Vietnam to Berlin, the Americans fire tactical nuclear weapons in the field, and Russian retaliation on British airfields brings off-course missiles down on Kent. What happens to the war after that? The film doesn't tell us. It assumes a single attack, the full and hideous destruction, and then a period of what it would be cynical to call recuperation. The technique is an extension of newsreel: the flat, assured voices of punditry; the street interviews; the occasional throwing in of times, names and places for extra verisimilitude; and the shaking handheld camera everywhere. Those pushing, running figures, lines of corpses, extras made up with blood, filth, scars and blisters, add up to an impressive effort. But no more: one shot of brutal and appalling truth (Belsen, the Warsaw Ghetto), or one consummately placed shot by a film-maker of imagination (Resnais) can freeze the heart. All Watkins' piled corpses remain extras with muck on their faces.

Perhaps it is some awareness of this which leads the film into areas which seem, in the most brutal sense, non-essential. Great emotive emphasis is given to the arming of the police; the cordoning off of devastated areas; the mass burning of the corpses; the shooting of the dying. The film ends with looters of food stores facing a police firing squad. Yet this is hypothetical (as with the earlier scenes of reluctance to take coloured evacuees) in a way that the stern facts of devastation aren't. The blurred line between dramatisation and documentary produces its own emotive vulgarity, horror scaled down to the level of the shock poster, and somehow muffled by a lack of proportion in the demonstration.

The War Game, in effect, takes an odd turn in its second half. Authority is represented by harassed men in uniforms and by policemen who seem, with one

"PARIS VU PAR": CLAUDE CHABROL AND STEPHANE AUDRAN.



exception, sturdier and much less disfigured than the citizens around them. There's a feeling of separation between 'them,' who somehow seem to have come off not too desperately and to have retreated behind their guns and uniforms, and lost, defenceless 'us.' Did Watkins mean this, or is it just a stray consequence of a fascination with the details of anarchy which harks back to Wells' *Shape of Things to Come*? In any case, it's in this subtle area of interpretation that the film might, I believe, be found irresponsible.

There's another rather odd episode, in a film whose script must have been given such scrupulous analysis. Early on, it is suggested that there would be profiteering in the materials—sand, boarding, sandbags—for private defences. One of the 'average' women interviewed says, surely implausibly, that the most she could spend on a shelter is seventeen and sixpence. There's a suggestion a) that poverty would prevent 'average' people from preparing any shelter; b) that the government is negligent here; but c) that any form of shelter would be useless. Such, at least, appears to be the train of thought: its blurred contradictions hint at the risks run by a treatment in which speculation looks like fact and fact begins to look like speculation. Even the commentary wanders to and fro across this border-line. Early on, we are in the speculative area of 'would.' Later, such and such things 'will' happen; by the end they 'have' happened. The tenses aren't consistently used; but it is escalation by commentary just the same.

The basis of Watkins' technique is, however, the interview: not the interview in its reflective, stream of consciousness form, as Denis Mitchell applies it, but the interview naked and unashamed and dead into camera. A few days before seeing *The War Game*, I watched ITV's analytical programme on the economic crisis, with the usual men-in-the-street revealing the usual gross, amiable unconcern about the issues at stake. Here, early on in *The War Game*, are the same people, perplexed, helpful, anxious to say the right thing, revealing their ignorance about Strontium 90.

This looks authentic; perhaps is authentic. Later we move into the faked or imagined interviews, the attempts to describe reactions to thermo-nuclear catastrophe. But the TV interview only looks real because we know, generally speaking, that it is real: as a technique in its own right, rather than a quick way of assembling impressions, it carries no guarantee of effect with it. Verisimilitude falters, as with those jungle films which try to suggest that the camera crew don't know what hazards are round the next corner. There is an artistic flaw at the heart of the thing, a kind of double-take of deception, as well as a rather damaging impression that television's first reaction to ultimate catastrophe would be to run out into the street and ask pointless questions of passers-by.

No cinema man, I believe, would think of tackling this subject in just this way. Indeed Kevin Brownlow, confronted with parallel problems in *It Happened Here*, solved them more imaginatively because he thought them through in a film framework. The camera had to have more reason for being where it was; the imagined newsreel gained from being placed within a context. Would all this strike one less if one had seen *The War Game* on the screen it was made for? Very possibly, since television provides its own pattern of references and catches the audience at its most vulnerable.



"THE LOVED ONE": AYLENE GIBBONS AND ROBERT MORSE.

The Times' defence correspondent wrote that "any commercial film company could have produced [*The War Game*] and shown it without any outcry." This I rather doubt. The paradox is that no commercial film company would risk the production; and that the BBC won't risk the TV showing—though they are now making the film available, through the B.F.I., to cinemas and film societies.

PENELOPE HOUSTON

THE LOVED ONE

ALL RIGHT, SO YOU CAN'T separate form and content. But life constantly messes up such neat theoretical formulations. The wine bursts from the bottle, or the cadaver persists obstinately in asserting that it has been put in the wrong box. So with Tony Richardson's film of Evelyn Waugh's *The Loved One* (M-G-M). To begin with, it is not strictly speaking a film 'of' *The Loved One* any more. Early in production Mr. Richardson was quoted, somewhat to Mr. Waugh's chagrin, as considering the book thin and dated. And so for the original classically precise and organised ironical *conte* we find substituted a wandering picaresque narrative about a jet-age Gulliver set down unexpectedly in the brave new world of California, to observe and take part in the weird tribal customs with all the cool non-involvement of a Martian and some of the amatory determination of a Tom Jones.

It is one line of approach to the theme of the book. And all might be well if it remained one line. But here form and content start diverging alarmingly. Terry Southern and Christopher Isherwood have clearly written the script as a roaring farcical burlesque, to be played as much like *Dr. Strangelove* as possible. Tony Richardson, on the other hand, seems to have decided that it should be treated as straight social satire (a line reflected, presumably, in the terribly coy publicity slogan 'The motion picture with something to offend everyone'), and directs accordingly. The result, of

course, is that we get characters with names like 'General Brinkman', 'Mr. Joyboy' and such, written in a style to match and then presented as though they are meant to provide some sharply realistic satirical side-lights on American military thinking, American mother-domination and kindred subjects. We are even required, reasonably for burlesque, unnervingly for satire, to be outraged in consecutive scenes because Whispering Glades is a clip-joint and then because Negroes and Jews are denied equal rights to be clipped.

The classic instance comes early on, in the film studio sequences which show John Gielgud, resident art director and our hero's uncle, being forced to instruct a rangy Western star with an impenetrable Texas accent in the intricacies of English public-school speech and behaviour so that he will be ready in a week or so to play a 'James Bond with human warmth.' Acceptable enough as burlesque, even if the joke is more than a trifle hairy by now. But when the whole incident is presented in such a way that we are obviously supposed to take it as biting satire on Hollywood methods, the intelligence rebels, and one starts asking tiresome, hypercritical questions, like what was the last time a Western star of that age (he is evidently about fifteen years too old to be country-and-Western) was big box-office? What was the last big studio run on these grandly pre-war, unashamedly nepotistic lines? What has any of this got to do with Hollywood 1966?

Once questions like this, however unfair in principle they may seem, start forming, there is nothing one can do to stop them. It is no good saying we ought not to be asking: if nevertheless we are, there is something wrong somewhere. And this querulous attitude affects other things. The visual style, for instance. The film is shot in that blotchy black-and-white, constantly over-exposed or under-exposed, and edited in that choppy, casual fashion which nowadays convey to an audience that this is modern cinema art they are watching. But why? Since we know Haskell Wexler as an excellent photographer and Tony Richardson as an experienced film craftsman we are willing at least to assume that it is deliberate. But no inherent artistic

justification is offered, and the oddities of continuity, far from making one feel that this is all immediate and spontaneous and alive, make one wonder uneasily instead if something has perhaps gone wrong, if this is one of those cuts we have heard so much about. (Otherwise, incidentally, there is little evidence of them, except for one obvious non-sequitur just after the heroine's suicide and the fact that Barbara Nichols, though prominently displayed on the billing, does not seem to be in the film at all.)

Of the acting, in the circumstances, it is difficult to speak. Robert Morse is suitably boyish and sinister as Dennis, though not very British (why bother any more to have him British?), and John Gielgud and Rod Steiger make a sharp impression, largely by setting firmly about playing the characters assigned to them and letting the rest of the film go hang. Most of the other guest stars are wasted, and the two other principals, Jonathan Winters in the dual role of the Blessed Reverend Glenworthy and his down-at-heel brother, and Anjanette Comer as what should be the only strong character and total believer in the story, suffer from sketchy writing and the vacillating tone of the direction. A film that really set out to offend everyone might make a change; but this is likely to irritate no one except audiences who, like the lady in the revue sketch, have come here to be insulted and don't intend to leave until they are.

JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

THE SPY WHO CAME IN FROM THE COLD

MARTIN RITT'S ADAPTATION of John Le Carré's novel has admirable qualities, but they are the sort of admirable qualities which all too easily can be seen as limitations. The screenplay, by Paul Dehn and Guy Trosper, is faithful to the novel in every essential respect; one feels, unkindly, that it should have added something. The casting by and large is excellent, each individual dovetailing neatly into the whole; yet after a while one starts to hanker for a character who isn't just a link between events. Oswald Morris's photography is sensitive and there are skilful contrasts in lighting and background which one can't help admiring; at the same time, however, the skill and sensitivity are a little too much in evidence, and they become distracting.

Which is to say that *The Spy* (Paramount) is a well-intended and scrupulously executed disappointment. Michael Hordern does a very clever bit as the middle-aged queer, Ashe, who first contacts Leamas when he comes out of Wormwood Scrubs; Cyril Cusack, the camera weaving spidery arabesques around his head, makes a sinister though slightly over-rehearsed Control, a sort of J. Alfred Prufrock Mabuse; Peter Van Eyck makes a brief but formidable appearance as Mundt, head of East German counter-espionage; and Beatrix Lehmann does her adder's voice as the chairman of the tribunal at which Fiedler, the little Jew who is Mundt's second-in-command, presents his case against Mundt. Oskar Werner really seems to me too nice and unsubtle for the part of Fiedler; though we are meant to like him it shouldn't be at the cost of softening the mind or character of a man whom the British Espionage have so expensively set out to destroy. Claire Bloom as Nan (Liz

in the book) is surprisingly good, coming across particularly well in the scenes which take place in her flat, all ideals, earnestness and a coltish affection; she and Sam Wanamaker, who plays the 'professional man' Peters with precisely the right degree of reserve, are well worth watching.

Richard Burton, who ought to know by now that he is really best in comedy, doesn't seem to be flexible enough in his approach to the role of Leamas. Technically, I suppose it's not an easy part; but Burton plays it on the one monotonous note as if no technical problem exists. It is a self-absorbed performance of narrow range, and in mood it ties in with the ponderously romantic music (Sol Kaplan) and the solemn, oh-so-deliberate camerawork and editing. The opening sequence, with its elaborate prowling round a meticulously reconstructed Checkpoint Charlie, and Mr. Kaplan's piano throbbing on the soundtrack is, I suppose, a forthright indication of the mood intended. No doubt by harking back to the Forties in this way the film does achieve a certain bleak, war-haunted quality, but I beg leave to doubt whether this attainment is worth the concomitant losses in immediacy and aesthetic surprise.

As a spy-fiction Jack-in-the-Box, however, the film works very well, as well as the book did; and there are enough ironies in the central plot device to give one a great deal of pleasure. Rather more emphatically than the book needed to, the film stresses Leamas's protests that Control couldn't have been running Mundt without his (Leamas's) knowledge; by deliberately assuming the role of little man, Leamas leads Fiedler into the trap which has been prepared for him. Then the box opens and the Jack jumps, and Leamas finds that the fiction he has been peddling is true. It turns out to be true, as a consequence, that he is the little man he has been pretending to be. Burton is the wrong actor for this belittlement, but the idea comes across well enough. And in the dialogue between him and Nan in the car as they drive towards the Wall at the end of the film there can be heard a suitable note of despair.

"THE SPY": RICHARD BURTON, OSKAR WERNER.



I say 'suitable' because I don't feel like saying anything stronger. The screenplay is pretty liberal in its use of words, and the plot is ingenious enough to give them their full worth; but the film as a whole lacks the weight which the words and the plot lead us to expect. I can only account for it by referring again to the almost superstitious respect with which Ritt has treated his original. In *The Outrage*, an absurdly literal revamping of *Rashomon* in Mexico, the change in location and actors necessarily added a dimension of its own in which he was bound in some degree to reveal himself; but in *The Spy*, with no essential modification of its original, he vanishes completely. Films as well made as this, and as anonymous, are no novelty. But *The Spy* claims to be making serious statements about the cold war, and Ritt would no doubt be the first to reject the notion of it as just a beautifully functioning machine. Without his personal involvement, though, that's all that it is. A brilliantly skilful job, but meaningless; a beautiful bus, but where's the driver?

JAMES PRICE

THE FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX

WHETHER THE INCREASING commercial potential of In-Flight Movies will put an end to the long-lasting vogue of air-crash films is a matter for conjecture. Perhaps we shall see a nostalgic return to shipwrecks or Stamboul-train pictures. At the moment however the shortest distance between a credit title and a grand statement about humanity continues to be via a forced landing by an off-course plane, with a passenger list compiled by a computer programmed by a neurotic UNESCO sub-committee.

On the face of it *The Flight of the Phoenix* (Fox) is a fairly typical example of the genre. Happily, however, several factors conspire to raise it above the normal level of such undertakings. Firstly, there is the awareness with which Lukas Heller's script steers towards clichés and then neatly sidesteps them, and the shrewd way in which Robert Aldrich works subtle variations upon the stereotypes of the passengers and the known screen personalities of the actors who play them. Secondly, just as an adventure story it functions with unexpected realism—helped a great deal by the unobtrusive camerawork of Joseph Biroc, the designs of William Glasgow, and some convincing grisly make-up. These people look and behave as if they have spent a couple of weeks stranded in the desert.

Thirdly it has (from Elleston Trevor's novel) a couple of ingenious ideas which might in other hands have been merely a gimmick and a plot twist. The 'gimmick' is the new plane that the survivors build from the wreckage of the old one, and the 'twist' is the delayed revelation that the brains behind the wild scheme is a model aircraft designer who has never constructed the real thing in his life. But Aldrich makes of the 'gimmick' an object of endeavour and a symbol of hope, and the 'twist' he handles as an index of character. And both are related to the theme of the picture, which is the necessity of cooperation for human survival.

To achieve this result Aldrich needs all of his two and a half hours—to allow his cast to give depth to their roles (to suggest indeed how ordinary they are), to establish the

feeling of isolation and the new sense of time that goes with it, to test the various kinds of individual response to the situation before the survivors can be brought to collaborate upon an initially ludicrous-seeming plan. By concentrating upon detailed observation of his characters' predicament Aldrich avoids the necessity for explicit moral judgment that a shorter film would have forced upon him. Our sympathies shift back and forth and ultimately we are left to draw our own conclusions.

There is, of course, no escaping the fact that his collection of characters is just too well balanced, commercially and dramatically, to make their presence on the same plane from the same oil-field seriously credible despite the supreme effort all round. (But who can say that one would be any less likely to finish up with a neat little allegory if, say, you were to have a plane-load of ordinary schoolboys crash on a desert island?) Admitting this, then, there are only a couple of points where Aldrich puts a foot badly wrong, though there are plenty of trifling errors here and there. In both cases it is where he allows an intrusion from the outside world: a slushy song heard on a transistor radio in the hands of a dying man and the silly mirage of a belly-dancer. One suspects that someone wanted to have a woman's name on the hoardings and a theme tune.

So far Aldrich's career breaks down neatly into three phases. For ten years he served an invaluable apprenticeship as first assistant to a number of outstanding directors, including Renoir, Polonsky, Losey and Chaplin. Then in a sudden creative burst he made a string of films culminating in the three black masterworks of 1955-56 (*Kiss Me Deadly*, *The Big Knife*, *Attack*). It was clear at this stage that he was under the influence of Polonsky and Losey and that his aggressive, nihilistic expressionism was their cinema without the controlling political vision. It was an exhilarating, courageous, and perhaps inevitable response to the times, but not something that could be long sustained. Next he followed his mentors into (for him voluntary) exile, with disastrous results for which he was not entirely to blame. These European films however are not without their dazzling sequences, and the same is true of the pictures he made on his return to America, although the personal control he gained over his productions was largely used in the cause of self-indulgence.

Now comes *The Flight of the Phoenix*, his best film for ten years, and drawing more, one would say, on Renoir and Chaplin than on Polonsky and Losey. The style is more relaxed, bent on going the distance for a sound points decision rather than striving for a knock-out in the early rounds. The style of the film and the implicit statement are almost the antithesis of what we have come to expect from Aldrich: judiciously positive rather than blackly pessimistic. No longer is Aldrich focusing upon a lone individual fighting against a hostile society which he can neither escape nor come to terms with. Calmness and reason have replaced hysteria and outrage. A cool contemplation of a situation has taken over from the stabbing images of destruction.

The result is inevitably a good deal less exciting, certainly less sensational, than the films of the mid-Fifties, and, equally inevitably, lacks the old eye-catching virtuosity. Sanguine it may be, but it is rarely corny or sentimental, and it might well mark the beginning of a more mature phase in Aldrich's career.

PHILIP FRENCH



"THE HOUSEHOLDER": SHASHI KAPOOR, LEELA NAIDU.

THE HOUSEHOLDER

WESTERN AUDIENCES LOOKING AT *The Householder* (Gala), which preceded the same team's *Shakespeare Wallah*, must of necessity view both plot and characters from the outside; so, in this case, do many of the creators. Although the producer (Ismail Merchant) and technicians are Indian, the director James Ivory is American, and the writer of both story and screenplay is Ruth Praver Jhabvala, a talented lady novelist of Polish extraction, now married to an Indian architect. Judging by her novels, this is essentially an author's film: Mrs. Jhabvala (according to Indian sources) may not get all the nuances right, but she certainly casts a personal, somewhat caustic eye on the foibles of Indian middle-class life.

Unlike *Shakespeare Wallah*, the emphasis here is on the Indian characters: a young, impecunious schoolteacher married to a rather impractical girl whom he professes not to care for, though they find themselves kept together by their unstated affection. Although the plot takes fleeting glances at the problems of wage levels, the cult of holy men, and the sex war in general (with the wives standing up for themselves in a decidedly perky fashion), the best observation is found in the purely comic scenes, notably the teachers' tea party presided over by a peculiarly cantankerous hostess, during which the wife happily stuffs herself with cakes as another lady attempts to sing until she collapses into giggles.

Here the tone is gentle and ironic (and not dissimilar to Ray's). Later, when the husband's mother arrives to attend the pregnant wife, the plotting, though equally enjoyable in a way, casts a revealing light on the author's background. The classic situation of suspicious mother-in-law, sulky wife and disgruntled husband stems directly from European, even Jewish-American, roots; and it is handled in such a way that the audience can look forward to the outcome with gleeful confidence. Sure enough, the husband writes to the family requesting

the mother's return ("Say, please send telegram," urges the petulant wife) and in a final charming scene, the ageing mother is packed off to the train, happily oblivious of the plot. These three characters are deftly sketched in, with a particularly glowing performance by Leela Naidu as the girl. (The main drawback in this English version is the nagging doubt that they would probably not express themselves quite in this way in the alternative Hindi version.) Subsidiary figures, such as the American and English eccentrics who provide opportunities for some heavy-handed satire at foreigners revelling in mysticism and Eastern 'spirituality', tend to be caricatures of caricatures ("India's steel production is going up as well," counters the husband gallantly). An uneven mixture, then, with quite obvious uncertainties in construction and direction, yet offering a variety of small but shining pleasures. Let's hope the team eventually gets round to doing *A Backward Place*, a more substantial and even funnier work by the same author.

JOHN GILLET

BUNNY LAKE IS MISSING

PREMINGER'S PICTURES ARE nearly always of high gloss, uniquely austere and uniquely elegant. His leading actors often come in the same mould, blank-faced and beautiful. Sometimes the total effect seems relevant, sometimes it doesn't; and *Bunny Lake Is Missing* (BLC/Columbia) is a moot point. Keir Dullea has odd eyes, Carol Lynley has very fine bones, and the upper-middle-class London locations look very well so clearly etched. The gloss is impenetrable and the smooth surface gives no foothold for sympathy, understanding, or insight. Given the plot—deranged and jealous American in London kidnaps illegitimate niece and pretends she never existed—and given Carol Lynley's permanent look of slight bewilderment, *Bunny* comes out like a *Last Year in Marienbad* for non-intellectuals.

Which would be fine if it were not for the

fact that one's faith in cliché is ultimately greater than one's faith in atmosphere. The surface may be utterly opaque, and the audience may be as heavily anaesthetised as possible, but in your heart you know you've seen it all before, so what's the point? We can't really share Miss Lynley's experience when we know that she is treading in the footsteps of innumerable mentally beleaguered heroines before her. When confidence in memory, subjective experience, or even in verifiable fact are shaken, that final confidence in cinematic precedent remains. If only it were made possible to believe that there might in fact be no Bunny Lake. But since it's not made possible, there's the final deeper uncertainty that the atmosphere might, after all, be pure accident.

Coming out of the film it is possible to be sure of only two things. The first is that the casting of the minor parts is brilliant. Noël Coward is repulsively funny as a decadent next-door neighbour. Martita Hunt as the headmistress of the kindergarten is exotic and charming. It is riveting to watch Olivier play what would normally be a straight policeman role and fill it with suggestion. And Anna Massey as a harassed and distraught kindergarten teacher gives an unmatchable performance. The thing about all four is that, either because of the detail or the depth of their portrayals, each seems potentially sinister. Yet it is possible to accept each one as a recognisable type, harmless enough. If the English really look like this to visiting Americans, what a jungle London must seem.

The second thing one can be sure of is that the climax of the film is good. Here finally the trancelike quality works—the impervious faces, the cool camerawork, the complete lack of commitment, make sense; and the scene disturbs more than would seem thinkable in the light of what has gone before. But that's not enough. The unfolding of the narrative just isn't interesting, and patience runs out before anything happens. Even in retrospect the climax justifies nothing. Is the picture better than it looked while it was happening? Does it matter?

J. H. FENWICK

CAROL LYNLEY IN "BUNNY LAKE".



FILM CLIPS

TO THINK THAT THERE was a time, not so long ago, when secret agents were just something which turned up from time to time on tatty late-night television series. Then James Bond happened, and now look at us. We used to make fun of the Italian cinema for the way it always threw itself with extravagant whole-heartedness into the vogue of the moment, whether it was Hercules/Maciste, strip-around-the-world, Western or whatever. But now here we are doing exactly the same with the spy or secret agent film.

Seldom, surely, can a vogue have sprung so quickly from so little, and progressed so hurriedly from fresh beginnings to extravagant decadence and self-parody. This year it seems that every second film announced has "spy" in the title somewhere; and to make quite sure that we cannot escape from it anywhere, virtually every series on television that used last year to be straight cops-and-robbers or international crime has been refitted for the new season with the whole secret agent works. (The most spectacular, and spectacularly misguided, example of this is *Amos Burke, Secret Agent*, ex *Burke's Law*. The only advantage of *Burke's Law* was that one would turn on week after week to see Gypsy Rose Lee or Lynn Bari or Laraine Day or Gloria Swanson or others of that ilk, five and six at a time, as guest stars. But who, for heaven's sake, is going to turn on just to see Gene Barry and some hazy European back-projections?)

It would be misleading to suggest that there is strict uniformity among all these various manifestations of the same basic urge in film-makers and filmgoers. Most of the S.A. films, however, fall fairly clearly into one of two categories: either they are extravagant wish-fulfilment fantasies, or else they are resolutely downbeat reactions against the fantasies, bent on telling us that a secret agent's life is mainly a matter of interminable form-filling and grimy bed-sitters. The first category has so far tended (naturally) to account for most of the biggest successes.

In fact so thoroughly has the guns, girls and glamour school of S.A. film got the upper hand that it has already rushed into decadence and spawned a sub-category, the send-up S.A. film. At least on paper it looks that way; but in practice it has become difficult if not impossible to tell the difference. I suppose the only reliable guide is in

the comportment of the hero. Sean Connery has just that touch of pomposity as Bond which forbids one to laugh too heartily with him, and prevents one from laughing at all at him. Even the most preposterous gadgets in the Bond arsenal are meant, one feels, to be believed in, at least as possibilities; and indeed there is nearly always a certain basis of stodgy rationalism to them which deprives them of a lot of their potential amusement value.

Compared with them, the gadgets at the disposal of the Man from *UNCLE* (another Fleming brain-child, by the way) or *Our Man Flint* are unashamedly nonsensical toys. *The Man from UNCLE* took a little time to find its tone, both on television and in the cinema. Now that it has done so, by throwing away all serious possibility of audience identification with the heroes, and putting them instead through a succession of completely fantastic adventures which invite us no more seriously to imaginative participation than did *Superman* or *Batman*, their command of a gleefully incredulous audience is complete.

Flint, I suppose, lends himself a trifle more to hopeful identification, but James Coburn plays him with a keen sense of the whole enterprise's absurdity, and the details dreamed up by the scriptwriters carry everything that crucial stage further than Bond. Anyone may dream himself into Bond's place with a succession of luscious foreign ladies one at a time, but Flint's four together, now really!

In fact now that the genre is heading (surely?) for extinction, laughing itself off the screen in a few short months, the funny thing is that looking back it is the Bond films, only a year ago so bright and fresh and inventive, which now suffer the fate of all bold precursors by looking a mite old-fashioned: stolid and literal and more than a trifle square. Still, the revolution is at hand: *Casino Royale*, the straightest, least gimmick-ridden of all the Bond books, seems fated to arrive on the screen as the ultimate spy send-up, with Peter Sellers, David Niven and Orson Welles, and without, as far as can be discovered, James Bond at all. Seems like poetic justice, really.

MENTION OF *BATMAN* reminds me of the strenuous attempts made in the last couple of months to introduce over here the current rage in America for *Batman* and similar Z-films of the Forties. Actually, it works to a certain extent in that an evening spent with *Batman* is quite entertainingly spent. There are enough amusing details, particularly in J. Carrol Naish's dastardly Jap villain, to keep one watching benignly, even if the fun is not exactly as fast and furious as it might be if one is going to devote some four and a half hours to seeking it out. Surely *Batman* is not by any means one of the best series of that vintage, though? What about *Superman*, which I remember as being much more diverting, or some of the Republic serials, which attained a purer primitive quality?

The answer to that would be, I take it, that it is exactly the badness, the lack of any distinction, in *Batman*, which has made it the current American cult-film. Maybe, but if so it seems a peculiarly boring sort of cult. Of course, when talking about cults of bad films, you have to be very careful what you mean by bad. When Kenneth Tynan, for example, launches an attack on "the cult of bad horror films," he does not necessarily mean films which those who like them believe to be bad, but films which to a

sophisticated cinema palate like Mr. Tynan's, nurtured on films with important subjects from Stanley Kramer, are clearly not intellectually respectable. This present American cult of bad films is something quite different, however: it is not a case of some people thinking good a group of films which other people think are bad, but of people banding together to like films which none of them thinks to be good on any level.

As such, perhaps, it may be seen as the last refuge of American sophistication. Anyone who reads American film criticism at all regularly will have noticed that a lot of it, especially that with the greatest intellectual pretensions, seems to have degenerated into a one-upmanship game in which the person who likes least himself, and can expose the most likes of others as naive, falsely based and immature, wins all. The trouble with this is that to be invincible in one's sophistication the only possible position is to like nothing at all. Which can be done, but sounds a trifle gloomy and strenuous.

So what is the answer? Obviously: like only things which everyone agrees are bad, yourself included, so that no one can accuse you of being merely naive in liking them. Hence the *Batman* cult for a start. After which, what? Abbott and Costello? Our Gang? Difficult, because as soon as you venture very far you might even, horror of horrors, start liking something someone, somewhere, thought was good. Still, thank heavens, for those of us who, like the Royal Personage, do not pretend to be intellectuals, such delicate discriminations are way above our heads.

I HAVEN'T BEEN FOLLOWING the critical progress of *Giulietta degli Spiriti* in America, but in the light of all this I wish I had. What a quandary it must pose, after all. If enough people agreed it was thoroughly bad, one might even be permitted to like it; but how awful if just enough people conspired to think it was good, so that in doing so one ran the risk of being bracketed with the woefully unsophisticated brethren. Certainly that is what would be likely to happen over here, where most were anti but just a few awkward customers were very pro indeed. Interestingly enough, the critics of *The Guardian* and *The Times*, who more often than not progress shoulder-to-shoulder, like Tweedle-Dum and Tweedle-Dee, were for once at daggers drawn.

Richard Roud was far and away the most hostile towards the film—"Reader's Digest Freud dressed up in what a small-town shopkeeper might think of as the height of chic, the whole spiced with a retarded schoolboy's idea of sex and decadence and, floating in this sea of kitsch, some vague dabbings with the kind of mysticism that one thought went out in the nineties . . . Only in such a second-rate capital as Rome could such nonsense be taken seriously." The critic of *The Times*, on the other hand, who is known to be quite unwell where Fellini is concerned, apparently took the view that the film's principal advantage on the level of ideas was its whole-hearted acceptance of irrationalism. Sniffily dismissing merely psychological explanations, he suggested that what made *Giulietta* a profoundly modern film was its willingness to affront the supernatural unflinchingly as a reality.

Between these two extremes there could be little chance of mediation, or indeed of compromise. Nevertheless most of the other critics came somewhere in between, often by skirting the awkward question of what the film was about or plumping boldly for it



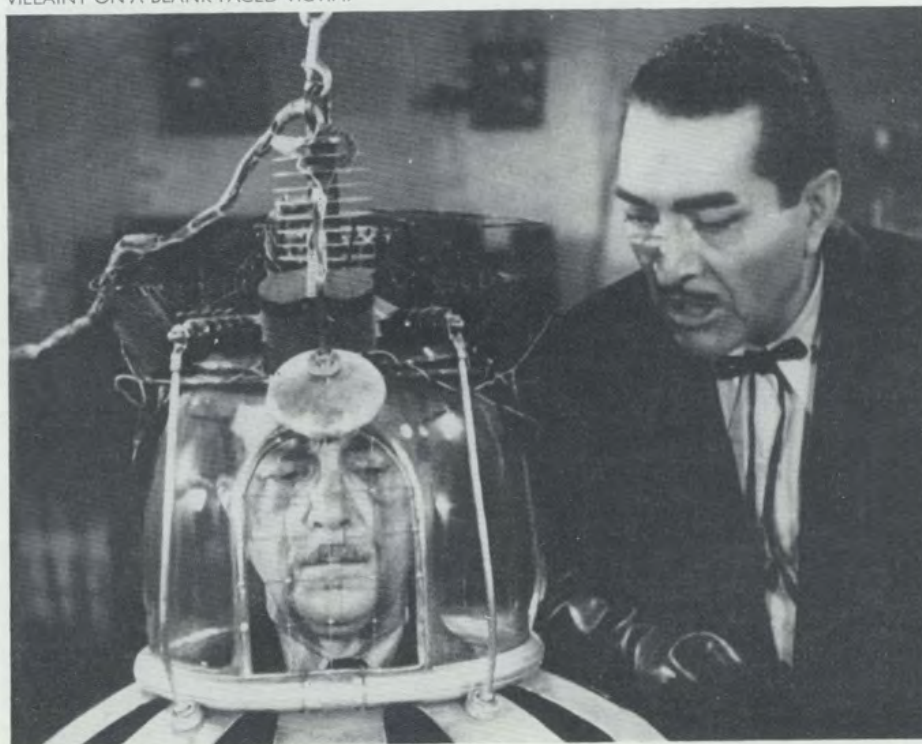
STELLA STEVENS IN "THE SILENCERS", THE MOST RECENT AND ONE OF THE MOST EXTRAVAGANT OF THE SECRET AGENT SPOOFS. PHIL KARLSON DIRECTS; DEAN MARTIN PLAYS THE INDESTRUCTIBLE MATT HELM.

being a lavish grand tour of nothing very much, and admiring, more or less according to taste, the scenery along the way. "Simply wild decoration piled top-heavily upon a small and flimsy sub-structure," as David Robinson put it in the *Financial Times*. Dilys Powell enrolled herself in the small number of enthusiastic supporters, along with, surprisingly enough, Nina Hibbin in the *Daily Worker*, who found *Giulietta* "the strongest and most positive expression of confidence in people Fellini has ever made; his richest and most valuable film to date." Less surprisingly, our other Marxist critic, Kenneth Tynan, did not like it: fresh from

devoting most of his column to *The War Game*, which he suspected "may be the most important film ever made" and compared not unfavourably with Michelangelo's "Last Judgment," he dismissed *Giulietta* as "a wife out of *Good Housekeeping* having visions out of *Flair*."

Others sat more daintily on the fence; John Coleman in the *New Statesman*, after several hundred words of giving and taking away (including the surprising and as far as I can see unique view that the film embodies "an overpowering contempt for women"), concludes that he awaits Fellini's next film "with grudging impatience." Isabel Quigly in

BACK TO "BATMAN", THE CULT FILM THAT NEVER WAS. J. CARROL NAISH PRACTISES SIMPLE ORIENTAL VILLAINY ON A BLANK-FACED VICTIM.



the *Spectator* found that Fellini's world was "a gimcrack place in which neon glows almost rosily in the romanticism of an oddly innocent eye," but thought the film far too long. And so on. Alexander Walker in the *Standard* summed up the anti view pungently by remarking that in *8½* and *Giulietta* "the cinema has found its His and Hers of exquisite banality."

The odd thing, considering the amount of heat the film generated, was the very small amount of light thrown on it. Hardly anyone got down very seriously to considering what it was about, or how Fellini had gone about doing what he intended and with what success. There was a lot of loose talk about the symbolism of the film, but mostly to complain that it was too simple and direct—which presupposes that there is some necessary reason why symbolism should be obscure, an arguable point at the best of times.

Only Nina Hibbin seemed to consider that the simplicity of the symbolism was deliberate and a virtue, though perhaps *The Times* was making the same point by emphasising the extreme clarity and neatness of the film in relation to, say, *8½*. Robert Robinson, true to his television persona of the man who keeps his head when all around are losing theirs, introduced a note of reason into his review in the *Sunday Telegraph* by considering the functional structure of the film and concluding, in an interesting if not entirely made-out case, that the trouble was one of balance, in that finally it was the presence of *Giulietta* which is called on to authenticate the visions, whereas the structure of the film seems to be designed on the assumption that they in some way authenticate her.

It's a point of view. But I can't help wondering after all this precisely what sort of an image of the film the average enquiring reader gets. Pretty mystifying, I would guess, and probably rather remote from the effect of the film itself. Certainly I went to see it

expecting something far wilder and more extravagantly baroque than the really rather slow, quiet, restrained film it actually is. I wonder if in a case like this rather more cool, exact description and less violent view-mongering, one way or the other, would not be more useful in the long run.

USUALLY WHEN AMERICAN university presses embark on an attempt, as they see it, to bring scholarly aid to the underdeveloped area of the cinema, they end up proudly reiterating things that everyone more closely involved with films has taken as commonplace for years. But occasionally research of this sort is done to some purpose. I've just been reading a rather interesting example, *The Serpent's Eye*, by Donald P. Costello. In it the author sets out to trace the chequered history of Shaw's relations with the cinema, his ideas on what the cinema should be, and how it all worked out in practice.

Of course, Shaw has always come in for a rough time from the film theorists because he believed, and persisted in the belief despite all evidence to the contrary in his own work, that theatre and cinema were not necessarily different in any fundamental way. Hence, he insisted that the first two films made from his plays, *How He Lied to Her Husband* and *Arms and the Man*, should use integral texts, and permitted something more to be done only by sanctioning the introduction of wordless interludes between the scenes of *Arms and the Man*. Pascal, of course, managed to manoeuvre him out of such a rigid attitude for *Pygmalion*, but the success of that only helped to confirm Shaw in his belief that he knew all about the cinema. *Major Barbara* and *Caesar and Cleopatra*, though "adapted" to the cinema, were scripted by Shaw quite unaided and according to his own views on film writing.

The trouble with trying to draw conclusions from all this—and Professor Costello

tends to fall into the trap—is that we are inclined to take the films that emerged as the only possible result. But it cannot be denied that only in *Pygmalion*, with Asquith, was Shaw working with a half-way capable director. And it is doubtful whether Cecil Lewis or Gabriel Pascal could have produced anything much better as cinema, even if they had had complete freedom to adapt and the irate author had not been constantly breathing down their necks.

Obviously, to test the truth of Shaw's ideas, for a certain sort of cinema if not for cinema as a whole, it would be necessary to see a Shaw play filmed with the same sort of discipline and imagination Cocteau brought to *Les Parents Terribles*. If this had ever been done, I think we should see that the real trouble with Shaw's theory is not so much the theory as the plays he was applying it to. The cinema does not have to be so different from the theatre. But where Shaw's plays filmed straight would be bound, surely, to fall short would be in precisely the same places and the same ways that they fall short as theatre. Wherever the characters give up any independent existence they may have and become monotonous mouthpieces of Shaw himself; wherever the talk gets really out of hand and loses all dramatic life and impetus; wherever the plays fit the stage only awkwardly and have to labour a lot of heavy exposition and careless contrivance to get all the necessary information on to the stage at all. These points, which are many, would show up badly under the magnifying scrutiny of the camera; but after all they show up quite badly enough in the theatre too.

The idea of dramatic craftsmanship in the cinema that Shaw wanted to put over is not necessarily wrong. When he writes in a draft adaptation of *Arms and the Man* (1941), "No changes of location are needed in the 3rd Act beyond the usual close-up, medium and full shots. It is a mistake to interrupt the play by changes of scene after the audience has become interested in the characters and story," he is stating a principle which, as a principle, still has a lot to be said for it. The only trouble is that in the most extensive and ambitious attempt yet to put it into practice, the five films made under Shaw's own supervision, the raw material and those immediately involved with its translation to the screen were too inferior to give it a fair run.

SHAW ON THE SET OF "THE MARRIAGE OF CORBAL" (ELSTREE, 1935). LEFT TO RIGHT: CAMERAMAN OTTO KANTUREK, NILS ASTHER, G.B.S., HUGH SINCLAIR, HAZEL TERRY, KARL GRUNE.



A TINY FOOTNOTE to *The Epic That Never Was*. All sorts of reasons have been put forward, most of them in the film itself, for the abandonment of *I, Claudius*. But one that has not been, as far as I know, was put in a letter to Bill Duncalf which he read from the stage of the NFT at one of the showings there. Can it be altogether insignificant, asked his correspondent, that the film was being made in the overheated, hypersensitive aftermath of Edward VIII's abdication (Laughton, you remember, claimed to have found the clue to his character in the abdication speech)? Obviously it cannot but have occurred to Korda, with his highly developed sense of what would and what would not go down well with the high and the mighty, that it could be the height of tactlessness to make a film about a stuttering emperor who came unexpectedly to the throne during the reign of a stuttering king who had just come unexpectedly to the throne. It's a thought, isn't it?

ARKADIN



"NIGHT OF REVENGE".

THE MYSTERIOUS X

John Gillett

"And then came a man—Benjamin Christensen—who did not fabricate his films but created them out of love and an infinite care for detail. He was thought mad. But time has shown that it was he who made a pact with the future."

—Carl Dreyer, 1920

ONE OF THE MOST intriguing aspects of a film festival retrospective is the sheer uncertainty of it all. One sits through hours of early material, sometimes without the slightest excitement, and then suddenly something comes on the screen which makes everyone sit up and realise once again the necessity of rewriting the standard history books. Such a moment occurred at Venice two years ago when we saw a section from Benjamin Christensen's first feature film, *The Mysterious X*. A small boy darts along a road, sidles past the guards and dives into a gallery running round a water-girt prison. The photographic texture was immensely rich, with a fine contrast between inky black and the shafts of sunlight gleaming through the pillars as the boy stealthily made his way to the cell where his father was imprisoned; the camera panned easily with him; each shot cut perfectly with the next. When the lights went up, we checked the programme book warily for the date—1913.

Personally, I always find the obsession of some historians with the problem of "who did what first" rather an academic one; but on the evidence of this excerpt one felt instinctively that here was not only an artist far in advance of his time, but one who appeared to have invented the cinema for himself. Up to then, Christensen was known only as the director of *Häxan* (or *Witchcraft Through the Ages*, 1921), a reliable standby for any Swedish season and slightly notorious for its nudes, shots of incredibly aged women being tortured and slopping food all over their faces, an air of being really an illustrated lantern lecture (the opening sequence, in fact, resembles an early art film, analysing drawings and documents with the aid of a teacher's stick). Seeing it again recently at the National Film Theatre, the novelty seemed to have worn off

slightly. The argument appeared a little naïve, the titles endless, and one was left admiring the remarkable set design and uncommonly precise cutting. But was this reaction prompted simply by a change of perspective? By then, we had seen Christensen's earlier films, with their less substantial subject matter but even richer range of invention and experiment.

Christensen was born in Viborg in 1879. His interest in the theatre led him to become an actor and singer in Copenhagen; later, he became a scriptwriter for August Blom and grew up in what was probably the most advanced film milieu of the time. Griffith was still working on his early attempts at cross-cutting, Feuillade was busy turning out dozens of shorts in preparation for his elaborate *Fantômas* serial; neither had yet perfected what was to become his mature style. When Christensen made *The Mysterious X*, the only element which was unmistakably of its time was the melodramatic narrative—a rambling farrago about a master spy who compromises the wife of a loyal naval lieutenant but is outwitted by the faith and perseverance of the lieutenant's son.

Like Sternberg ten years later, Christensen saw the screen initially as an area which had to be painted with light. The interior furnishings of the country house are brightly striped, mirrors are used to reflect action, and the film abounds in shadow effects caused by people switching off lights as they pass from room to room. Christensen was also the first filmmaker to realise that a single set-up can often hold a greater atmospheric charge than a whole sequence if all its elements are carefully judged. Thus, the house party scene ends with a long-held shot of the guests waving goodbye to a group of cadets driving off in an old car in a sunny, leafy country setting which somehow symbolises all the false confidence of a Europe soon to be catapulted into war. Earlier on, there is a panning shot of horsemen trotting over a marsh backed by several huge pylons, which sees Christensen looking forward (unconsciously, of course) to an age when such shots would serve a much more calculated purpose. And all the way through, lighting and set decorations are used to give the

interiors a lived-in feeling which was rarely achieved elsewhere at this stage in the silent cinema.

With his second film, *Night of Revenge* (1915), he really came to grips with an elaborate story-line. Again there are obtrusive melodramatic elements, but the varied strands are neatly interlocked, and tinting is used to differentiate the various locations, not merely to separate night from day. The acting, too, shows a great improvement on the earlier film, with less period hand-wringing, notably from Christensen himself (who was probably the first actor-director, playing the loyal lieutenant in *The Mysterious X*, the shambling old convict in this film, and a jovial, hairy Satan in *Häxan*). Most startling of all is the camera style, with its stressing of detail in close-ups and gradual revelation of what the characters are doing, as in the scene where one is shown by a subtly panning camera exactly how the boy, locked in a closet, reaches out with a pole to help his trapped step-father reach a telephone. The story, in fact, is seen *through* the camera and not merely recorded by it, not least in the climax with its veritable flurry of cross-cutting as the avenging convict

stalks the mistress of the house from room to room. Here Christensen's flair for making a sequence come alive is seen at its most sophisticated; the house, the furnishings, take on a nightmarish aspect, as heads loom behind protective windows, keys are turned feverishly in locks, and melodrama is transmuted into art.

With these films, our knowledge of Christensen's creative activity ends. He went on to direct in Germany, act in Dreyer's *Mikaël*, and make several horror films (or so they are described) in America with such distinguished players as Norma Shearer and Lon Chaney. With the coming of sound, he returned to make a few films in Denmark, and died in 1959. Most reports indicate that the American films are lost—at least for the moment. One can only wonder what he did with the greater American technical resources of the 1920s; his contemporaries, Sjöström and Stiller, certainly made the most of them. One thing is now certain: Christensen was not a "one-shot" director, but a consistent innovator who took a primitive toy and gave it a syntax of its own. For that, we can safely claim him as a genuine *auteur*.



Nicole Vedrès, 1911-1965

FIFTEEN YEARS AGO, in SIGHT AND SOUND, Nicole Vedrès paid a simple, moving tribute to a fully-remembered Humphrey Jennings. Now she herself is with us no more. To friends who had known her over the years the news of her death came as a shock of horror and disbelief. Yes, there are times when clichés ought to ring true. She had retreated gradually into her shell, as if . . . As if happier? Not quite that, surely. I think she did not like the world about much. There is a sense in which the best among us cannot be fully reconciled with present-day Western society. In a TV broadcast recorded a few months ago (her last public appearance, I think), she said in an aside that she did not see more than one chance in a thousand for the best to come out on top.

She could be very funny about what one could term the Paris hum and hell, now aggravated by the dawning of P.R. Yet the point here is, hers never was the voice of self-pity. She spoke of what she saw and heard, and spoke her mind. And was right. We used to have occasional long conversations when we both wrote for *Le Mercure de France* (she, precisely what she fancied, and eventually there resulted a sequence of truly remarkable books; I wrote on films). A manner of dialogue had developed. There were times when both essays seemed to respond to one another. And so I watched with sad fascination how the process of disillusionment in a remarkable mind came to be.

I believe there are reasons why Nicole Vedrès will be remembered. The daughter of a civil servant (her father was the librarian at the then *Chambre des Députés*) and of the

earliest French translator of Joyce, she herself entered the cinema almost by accident. When *Paris 1900*—the work on which Resnais, as an assistant, started a brilliant career—came to be praised for what surely it will remain, a minor landmark in film-making, she was genuinely astonished. I can remember her walking out to loud applause after the Cannes projection, a tall woman, a shy, sceptical smile on her face. We now realise that the disturbing seeds of nostalgia informed a witty remembrance of time past.

Previously, she had written a first novel, *Le Labyrinthe ou le Jardin de Sir Arthur*, in which could be detected her absorption in Virginia Woolf: an elegant, slightly stilted tale, quite beautiful. She wrote more novels, fine ones, often reviewed in the absent-minded, mildly laudatory, Parisian manner.

As for films, following *Paris 1900*, apart from a short on her friend Jean Rostand, the biologist, she limited herself to *La Vie Commence Demain*. Ever modest, she saw no more in it than a chance to let more famous people have their say. The fall in interest from the former to the latter work carries its, to my view, clear meaning. *La vie commence demain?* Certainly she must not have had reason to worry then about her own health, yet it seems to me the film was like a brave gesture never to side with the reactionaries—a gesture. More than others, an earnest Sartre appeared to be the mouthpiece in the film. Nicole liked Sartre the man, and like all of us must at some point have been impressed by that formidable flow of rhetoric. Yet it was to become increasingly clear that all the time she had and kept her doubts. Later, when asked why she gave up the cinema, she said, "But how do you know I could direct actors?" Or flatly, "It's not for a woman."

The reluctant modernist all the way, she was not a feminist and quietly let people think that she stood for this and that. Her books of essays really make all this clear, in her own implicit manner. Her inner conviction was that nobody would bother really to read her, let alone take notice. All this she explained—up to a point—in vivid conversation, the most lively talker I've come across. Everybody knows who ever heard her on French TV that she spoke in a fast, animated way, spreading riches. She could also be almost stubbornly discreet. That a time came when she was looked upon as a TV "personality," albeit marginally, was a paradox and could not last. She gradually recoiled from it all. In truth she stood for private relations, in a somewhat Forsterian sense.

In her essays she kept plundering and exploring what more and more must have been to her a world of appearances, our world, herself surfacing with a true anecdote as if from the depths of the sea. She enjoyed out of the way reading—the novels by Jules Vallès depicting a nineteenth century sincere young man, or Aldous Huxley's methodical determination not to go blind. She was of her time, only lucidly so.

JEAN QUEVAL

BOOK REVIEWS

THE FILMS OF AKIRA KUROSAWA, by Donald Richie. Illustrated. (University of California Press/Cambridge University Press. 88s.)

AFTER HIS BIG BOOK on the Japanese cinema in general, it was a natural step for Donald Richie to turn to one of his favourite directors for a single large-scale study. The Kurosawa book has clearly been brewing for some time, and we have already been treated to excerpts of one kind or another in various film magazines (SIGHT AND SOUND included) during the last few years. For the most part, it consists of individual analyses of Kurosawa's twenty-four films from *Sanshiro Sugata* (1943) to *Red Beard* (1965). Early on, one begins to suspect that such a rigid method was perhaps unwise; yet as one works through the text the reasons become clearer. Richie points out, and his characterisation of the films demonstrates, that Kurosawa has many styles: a film by film analysis gives him room to pin-point the differences in method and purpose. In any case, Richie's own approach varies considerably. In some cases the actual story is described in detail; in others, the narrative outline is compressed to make way for lengthy comment on acting, treatment, camera methods, use of music and so on.

One would not wish all directors to be anatomised in this fashion, but Richie is enough of an enthusiast to carry the reader along for most of the way. The book's premise, as one would expect from his previous writings on the Japanese cinema, is that Kurosawa is a great director and the creator of "perhaps the best Japanese film ever made" (*The Seven Samurai*). Although the second half of the statement is arguable, it does give a clue to Richie's approach: a direct statement of likes and dislikes and a strong response to the free-wheeling, adventurous aspects of Kurosawa's art, as well as a determination to reach the core of each film's meaning.

Richie's main concern is with the director as moralist, as an explorer of illusion versus reality, and as a modern innovator who turned some of Japan's classical dramatic forms upside down and made them serve a new purpose. The moralist, the observer of human conscience under stress, can be found in the isolated figure of the old man in *Ikiru* (who only comes alive when nearly dead) and in the young doctor in *Red Beard* who has to face and understand pain and death before he can become as good as his master. Positive and negative forces constantly face each other in Kurosawa's work—sometimes under the guise of borrowed forms, as in the two 'Westerns', *Yojimbo* and *Sanjuro*, which Richie sees as both send-ups and moralistic entertainments. But Kurosawa's characters are rarely wholly black or white. Sometimes they merge almost physically together, as in the climax of *Drunken Angel* or the wonderful moment at the end of *Stray Dog* when detective and criminal collapse together in a field, begrimed and panting like two hunted animals.

One of Richie's chief attributes is his ability to make a film come visually alive. This is most evident in the sections on *Ikiru* and *The Hidden Fortress*, with their detailed and lucid breakdown of sequences done in such a way that even if the reader has not seen the films the images come vigorously to life off the page. Kurosawa's comments (liberally interlaced with Richie's own) also often confirm a doubt or clear up a misunderstanding. He clearly senses the somewhat schematic aspect of the scenario of *Ikiru*, and wishes that Shimura could have been "a bit more relaxed." The book, in fact, reveals Kurosawa as the least complacent of directors, slightly suspicious of praise from any quarter and critical of Japanese films in general, though he admits a liking for Mizoguchi. In view of the oft-repeated rebuff from both East and West that Kurosawa is a Western-orientated director, it is interesting to read that his main concern is with the home audience, with the young Japanese who are more likely to accept his ideas if they are presented in a Western-style format.

Richie's bounding enthusiasm does not blind him to his director's

weak spots, but he occasionally leaves the reader wanting a few more facts and opinions. Although I saw *The Idiot* many years ago and without subtitles, I still retain a strong visual memory of it. Richie tends to concentrate on the film's faults and rather glosses over it—this is, in fact, the shortest of the book's sections. And one would have liked more about Kurosawa's feelings for the Russian authors he has used (a whole thesis could be written on the points of contact between the Russian and Japanese artistic conscience). A fuller description of the sections missing from *The Seven Samurai* on its European release would have been useful. Richie is also a little reticent about what I, for one, consider to be Kurosawa's chief failings: his fondness for making his actors give out *fortissimo* for much of the time, and his tendency to stress obvious things in an equally obvious way (a good deal of *Drunken Angel*; the 'happy birthday' scene in *Ikiru*; the laboured evocation of the sinful city towards the end of *High and Low*).

Nevertheless, although one may argue with some of the critical judgments, the total achievement of the book is considerable. Here is a complete portrait of a man as artist, thinker and explorer, including invaluable descriptions of his shooting methods and the way in which some of the cinema's most striking bravura passages were achieved. A final, slightly less enthusiastic word about the book's physical make-up: in an attempt to get a lengthy text into 200 pages, each page has two columns printed in a rather small type which does not make for easy reading. The generally well-chosen stills are also rather indifferently reproduced. Not a book, because of its bulk, for casual reading: a firm table and a good light are advised.

JOHN GILLET

SURREALISME ET CINEMA, edited by Yves Kovacs. (Études Cinématographiques, Paris. Numbers 38-39 and 40-42, 8 and 9 Francs.)

"I HAVE COME," Rimbaud once wrote, "to hold sacred the confusion of my own mind." What with Rimbaud was a strictly personal affair becomes with the surrealists a collective contagion, affecting not only the original coterie but all those connected with the movement and even its would-be critics and analysts. What exactly was (and for that matter still is) the relationship between surrealism and the cinema? Each of the writers in this collection has his own interpretation, more or less persuasive, of some aspect of the relation; but these partial interpretations do not add up, for they each assume different answers to a prior and more important question. What was (or is) surrealism in the first place?

On the whole the historical and documentary material in the collection is the best, for here the initial problem is much simpler. The actual surrealist movement in the Twenties and Thirties produced a number of films of which three (*L'Etoile de Mer*, by Robert Desnos and Man Ray; *La Coquille et le Clergyman*, by Antonin Artaud and Germaine Dulac; and *Un Chien Andalou*, by Dali and Buñuel) are undoubtedly interesting, and one (*L'Age d'Or*) is a certain masterpiece in both cinema and surrealist terms. It also, following a suggestion in Breton's *Nadja*, developed a mysterious subjective approach to the cinema in general. Being unable or unwilling to make films themselves, the surrealists systematically pillaged the ordinary non-surrealist cinema for suggestive material. From early serials like *Judex* to latter-day Fritz Lang, almost any film could be made to yield its moments of surrealist experience. With the decline of the movement in the Thirties, this pillaging became the only authentic surrealist activity in the cinema field.

* * *

This is where the difficulties begin. Historically surrealism was a vision of the world and an activity designed to pursue the implications of this vision. It was not an abstract concept like "realism": nor was it simply a style, like Cubism. The connections between surrealism and later cinema are therefore extremely hard to determine. Objectively one can point to a number of directors who have admired and claimed to be influenced by surrealism—Alain Resnais in *Marienbad*, for example. Less legitimately one can label as surrealist various forms of fantasy, irrationalism and whimsy from Cocteau to Dick Lester. Quite a few of the contributors here manage to get bogged down in the sub-scholarly game of plotting suchlike superficial influences and similarities. Minnelli, Bergman, Corman: the list is apparently all-embracing. Under this fine mesh of supposed connections the authentic voice of the movement is quietly and effectively smothered.

This is not to deny either the existence of the connections or the usefulness of the material collected, particularly the "témoignages". The net is cast wide and brings in the testimony of Wajda and Borowczyk as well as that from nearer at hand. There is also an

extract from the script of Buñuel's *Simeon del Desierto* which is perhaps the best thing in the whole collection. But the presence of items like Borowczyk's testimony and the Buñuel extract only serves to heighten the impression of a general lack of direction. Surrealism is a revolutionary movement or it is nothing. To quote Verlaine this time, "*Tout le reste est littérature.*"

GEOFFREY NOWELL-SMITH

BEHIND THE SCREEN. The History and Techniques of the Motion Picture, by Kenneth Macgowan. Illustrated. (Delacorte Press, New York, \$12.50.)

HISTORIES OF THE CINEMA, like histories of the world, should never be written. For the cineaste they provide little more than a hurried re-exploration of ground already covered; for the general reader a packaged tour of an immense continent, which may whet the appetite but is more likely to irritate and confuse and in the end leave only a blurred memory. Kenneth Macgowan, producer of fifty Hollywood films and in recent years chairman of the Department of Theater Arts at UCLA, completed this vast compendium of facts and figures just before his death as a companion volume to *The Living Stage*, his equally monumental work on the theatre. As a history of the cinema, the book falls foul of the same pitfalls as its predecessors: omission, an arbitrary and subjective interpretation of what is and what is not important, and the aesthetic impossibility of treating the cinema as both an industry and an art form in the same breath.

As a producer with many years experience in the Hollywood studios, Macgowan is best on the background to the American film. The scope of the book precludes anything more than the barest outlines of the European contribution. Eisenstein and Pudovkin get their customary accolades, and there is a chapter on German expressionism; but the rest of Europe is skated over in a few pages with such uninformative sentences as, "Directors like Lang and Pabst in Germany, Clair, Feyder, Renoir and Duvivier in France . . . sought more and more successfully to make a motion picture that would be filmic as well as audible." Dreyer and Lang are accorded a few lines apiece, Feuillade a casual reference, but neither Christensen nor Buñuel are thought worthy of mention. Gance's triptych screen is discussed at some length, but there is no reference to his earlier work; Renoir crops up as only a name;

and the Dadaist and Surrealist experiments in France are not recorded. Less excusable is Macgowan's cursory dismissal of everyone except Chaplin as "lesser comics". Keaton gets two lines, Lloyd, Langdon, Laurel and Hardy hardly that. An odd bias against the silent era ("Where one or more are gathered together, man abhors the vacuum of silence") gives rise to the contention that very few silent films can be seen without embarrassment today on the grounds that "the realism of the photography was thwarted by absurdly unreal stories."

Macgowan is commendably comprehensive on the prehistory of the cinema, providing a detailed account of the inventions leading to what Dickson called "the crystallisation of eons of groping enchantment," from Kircher's early magic lantern to Muybridge's Zoöpraxographical Hall and the "Edison" Vitascope. He is also good on Hollywood and the background to the studios (Griffith's experiments with controlled light, for instance, owed much to the fact that Biograph was one of the first companies to have indoor studios). There are fascinating chapters on the vagaries of censorship and the vacillation of the Hays Office and the Hollywood Production Code.

But the real trouble with a book like this is that one has to plough through acres of familiar territory in order to find something that hasn't been said before. Macgowan owes much to previous historians (Ramsay, Sadoul, Rotha), his selection of material is inevitably arbitrary, and his text tends to be punctuated with long lists of film titles. The book is copiously and judiciously illustrated; and on the whole is best read for diversion rather than for scholarship.

DAVID WILSON

BOOKS RECEIVED

MARCEL CARNE. By Robert Chazal. (Editions Seghers, Paris, 7.10 Fr.)
THE CINEMA AS ART. By Ralph Stevenson and J. R. Debrix. (Penguin Books, 6s.)

ESTHETIQUE ET PSYCHOLOGIE DU CINEMA, Volume II. By Jean Mitry. (Editions Universitaires, Paris, 29.60 Fr.)

GRETA GARBO. By Raymond Durnat and John Kobal. (Dutton Vista, 10s. 6d.)

I LOST IT AT THE MOVIES. By Pauline Kael. (Cape, 35s.)

ELIA KAZAN. By Roger Tailleur. (Editions Seghers, Paris, 7.10 Fr.)

FRANCESCO ROSI. By Giuseppe Ferrara. (Canesi, Rome, L. 1,500.)

UNDERSTANDING THE MASS MEDIA. By Nicholas Tucker. (Cambridge University Press, 30s.)

CORRESPONDENCE

Godard and Proust

The Editor, SIGHT AND SOUND

SIR,—May I add a small note to the growing number of literary allusions that have been spotted in Godard's films. It is probably not coincidental that "vivre sa vie" and "bande à part" are set off within inverted commas in two consecutive paragraphs dealing with a group of carefree young girls ("les jeunes filles en fleur") in Proust's *A la Recherche du Temps Perdu*. The relevant passages (from the Pléiade edition, Volume I, p.793) are:

1. "... en employant des termes d'argot si voyous et criés si fort, quand je passai auprès d'elle (parmi lesquels je distinguai cependant la phrase fâcheuse de 'vivre sa vie') . . ."
2. "... cette conscience aussi de se connaître entre elles assez intimement pour se promener toujours ensemble, en faisant 'bande à part' . . ."

Yours faithfully,

University of Ibadan,
Nigeria.

ADELE KING

Gertrud in Hollywood

SIR,—I write about this only because I feel it is something that should be known. I was present last week at what must have been one of the first screenings in this country of *Gertrud*. The film has been entered as the official Danish film to be considered as Best Foreign Film by the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences. The screening was for the benefit of the foreign film nominating committee.

One doesn't expect too much from this group. But what one does expect, what one has every right to expect, is ordinary good manners.

Carl Dreyer's *Gertrud*, sirs, was booed and shouted down until someone gave the order to stop the film in the middle. It was not even screened all the way through. And this was not from a paying audience, but from a board of supposed experts, whose duty it was to view the submitted films and judge their comparative merits.

This conduct may not be without precedent, but it is certainly without justification.

Yours faithfully,

California, U.S.A.

(Name withheld at the
writer's request)

Hitchcockery

SIR,—It is perhaps undignified for authors to wrangle with reviewers about their books; none the less, there are some points in Miss Houston's generous review of my *Hitchcock's Films* which I would like to take up, in the interests of "the common pursuit of true judgment."

I am very angry with myself for having bothered to defend in detail the back-projection, etc., in *Marnie*: not because I consider it indefensible, but because it has provided my opponents with precisely that means of evading the major issues that I wished to withhold. Not one of my reviewers (to my knowledge) has taken me up on the significance of the Marnie-Mark Rutland relationship, the characteristic Hitchcockian preoccupation with different sorts of order (valid and invalid), or the positive moral values embodied in Mark himself, though it is to these that most of my chapter on *Marnie* is devoted and on these that my claims for the film's importance are based; almost everyone, on the other hand, has taken up the (relative) side-issue of the back-projection. I aimed in my book to force critics at least to discuss the main grounds for attaching importance to Hitchcock; I could kick myself for providing such an easy escape route.

I would like to try to defend and justify those "literary comparisons" that Miss Houston finds "extraordinarily unhelpful." With Keats, I had in mind particularly *Lamia*, with a side-glance at the *Nightingale Ode*. The basic theme of *Lamia* is (could anyone deny it?) remarkably close to that of *Vertigo*: the attraction of a world of romantic illusion as an escape from reality. A certain

immaturity is apparent, it seems to me, in Keats's treatment of Apollonius: all he does is shatter the hero's illusion, yet he is treated downright vindictively (he provokes the famous passage denouncing "cold philosophy"). Altogether, one feels in *Lamia* an endorsement of the enticements of illusion (reality doesn't get much of a look in) that one can only call unhealthy. It does not seem to me "unhelpful" to use this to set off by contrast the mature balance of responses to illusion and reality in *Vertigo*.

The Forster parallel is more obvious: one has only to compare Mrs. Brenner's treatment of the other characters in the last sequences of *The Birds* with Mrs. Moore's treatment of Adela, etc., subsequent to her experience in the Marabar cave, to be struck not only by the similarity between the development of the two characters, but by a close parallel between the experiences that precipitate that development. Despite Forster's careful building up of the symbolic significance of the caves, it seems to me that one is never quite convinced on a naturalistic level of the terrible effect of the echo on Mrs. Moore—it is significant that when she talks, later, of the experience, the dialogue becomes stilted and over-explicit. On the other hand, the effect on Mrs. Brenner of finding Dan Fawcett's body, and her subsequent development, seem to me, detail by detail, to carry absolute conviction: there is no discrepancy here between the symbolic and behaviouristic levels of meaning. This seems to me at least as helpful as Miss Houston's use of *A Room with a View* in her often illuminating article on *Charulata* (where the chief effect, perhaps unintended, is to remind the reader that Ray's film, like Forster's novel, is a somewhat slight work—though surely more completely successful?).

Welwyn Garden City,
Herts.

Yours faithfully,
ROBIN WOOD

Fun in a Chinese Laundry

SIR,—Concerning Elliott Stein's excellent analysis of *Fun in a Chinese Laundry*, that fascinating, frustrating anti-biography, it is apparent that von Sternberg's version of the *Wedding March* affair is not necessarily contradictory to the "counter-evidence" of Sadoul and Madame Eisner. In my opinion, von Sternberg did ask, and was granted von Stroheim's permission to edit *The Wedding March*. Naturally, von Stroheim condemned the result. At the risk of being attacked for heresy, I might venture the opinion that the chief reason *The Wedding March* remains von Stroheim's greatest film is its superior editing; he had no feeling for editing, and this is evident in his other films.

Mr. von Sternberg told me recently that he admires *Foolish Wives*, but none of von Stroheim's other works, and that he considers von Stroheim a bad actor. When I protested with: "But *La Grande Illusion*?" he replied, "Yes, well, there he had a good director."

Yours faithfully,
MICHAEL McKEE

SIR,—I liked Elliott Stein's piece about *Fun in a Chinese Laundry*, Josef von Sternberg's autobiography. Your readers may like to know that we are publishing an English edition of this book in September 1966.

Yours faithfully,
Martin Secker & Warburg Ltd.,
London, W.1. JAMES PRICE

A Ford Footnote

SIR,—Mea culpa about the Ford television film (Correspondence, Winter issue of SIGHT AND SOUND). May I make amends by supplying the title of the "Director's Playhouse" episode with John Wayne which Mr. Bates could not remember: it was called *Rookie of the Year*. There is also something mysterious which the Cinémathèque turned up for their Ford retrospective. It was shown without credits, ran 26 minutes, and starred John Wayne in a story of two nuns battling with a Chinese communist major (shades of *Seven Women*). The only information volunteered was that it might be an episode called *A Fight for Life* and might come from a series called "The Bamboo Cross." Can anyone throw further light?

Yours faithfully,
London, S.W.19. JOHN RUSSELL TAYLOR

Buster Keaton

SIR,—On page 25 of the Winter 1965/66 issue of SIGHT AND SOUND it is stated that "We have been unable to identify the still of Keaton looking through the bars" and it is suggested that it may be from *The Goat*. Surely it is from the opening scene of *Cops*, also made in 1921—Keaton talking to his girl through the bars of the huge drive gates?

Yours faithfully,
Huddersfield, Yorks. HAROLD TRUSCOTT

YOUNG TURKS OF SPAIN

continued from page 69

suffocation. The absence of petty competition is also quite remarkable. One can hardly imagine such a friendly group in any other country: friends in cinema and in magazines as well as in life, to the point of forming a 'movie housing colony' in the district of Madrid next to Nicholas Ray's nightclub, and to the point of writing scripts for each other and teaching each other about cinema—like Berlanga who taught Carlos Saura who in turn taught Eceiza.

To illustrate this solidarity, I can find no better example than Elias Querejeta, a former professional footballer who, because he was Eceiza's friend and liked movies, used his prestige in football circles to raise funds and then made with him *A Traves el Futbol*. They collaborated afterwards on a script (*Our Beloved Helen*) which was never shot, then on Bardem's *The Innocent Ones*. Then Querejeta became a full-time producer in order to produce his friends' pictures, like Jorge Grau's *Summer Night*, Eceiza's *Present in Body* and Saura's *The Hunt*. Since the last two of these received the financial support granted to films 'of special interest', Querejeta is now able to settle down as an independent producer.

Finally, I would like to mention one slightly unexpected consequence of the repressive atmosphere which surrounds the Spanish cineastes: unanimously, the fifteen Young Turks reject the idea of exile. What they want is to remain Spaniards and to make authentic Spanish films. Luis Berlanga expressed this attitude to me in answer to my questions about his future contract in Mexico. "I am furious at having to go to Mexico, even after two and a half years of silence, because the only thing that country has in common with us is the language. The rest is different. If I want my actors spontaneously to drink sherry, it will be tequila once transposed into Mexican life; and even the coffee won't be the same. I wouldn't like anyone to say 'Let's see what Berlanga is capable of doing once he is free' about my Mexican films. Because if producers ask me to shoot such-and-such a film, a sketch or a co-production, it will not necessarily correspond to what I intimately feel."

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

20th CENTURY-FOX for *Modesty Blaise*, *How to Steal a Million Dollars and Live Happily Ever After*, *Woman of Summer*, *The Innocents*.
UNITED ARTISTS for *Viva Maria*, *The Best Man*.
UNITED ARTISTS/MELNOR for *A Funny Thing Happened on the Way to the Forum*.
UNITED ARTISTS/WOODFALL FILMS for *The White Bus*.
UNITED ARTISTS/CHARLES K. FELDMAN for *Anyone for Venice?*
PARAMOUNT PICTURES for *The Spy Who Came In From the Cold*.
WARNER-PATHE for *The Servant*, *Kagi*.
RANK FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *Blind Date*, *The War Lord*.
BLC/COLUMBIA for *Bunny Lake is Missing*, *The Silencers*, *Batman and Robin*.
BLC/COLUMBIA/HAMMER for *The Damned*.
BLC/BRITISH LION for *The L-Shaped Room*.
GALA FILM DISTRIBUTORS for *The Householder*, *Eva*.
AMANDA FILMS for *Thomas l'Imposteur*, *Paris vu par*.
UNIVERSAL for *A Countess from Hongkong*.
UNIVERSAL/ENTERPRISE for *Fahrenheit 451*.
HAWK FILMS for 2001: *A Space Odyssey*.
HAMMER FILMS for *The Man on the Beach*.
CHAMPS-ELYSEES/JET for *Amador*.
AGATA FILMS/MEDITERRANEE/ATLANTIS for *Llanto por un Bandido*.
SOFRACIMA/ARGOS/EUROPA for *La Guerre est Finie*.
SCALERA FILM for *La Tosca*.
DAIEI/DONALD RICHIE for *Her Brother*, *The Sin*.
DONALD RICHIE for *The Tale of Genji*.
JAMES CLARK for *Darling* script extract.
DANISH FILM MUSEUM for *Night of Revenge*.
RADIO-TELEVISION-FRANCAISE for photograph of Nicole Vedrès.
NATIONAL FILM ARCHIVE for photograph of George Bernard Shaw.

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FILM GUIDE

Films of special interest to SIGHT AND SOUND readers are denoted by one, two, three or four stars.

****ALPHAVILLE (*Connoisseur*) Godard's 1984, in which Lemmy Caution goes as representative of our world to Alphaville, city of machines (which is also Paris), and destroys its cold, rational, computer mind. Dazzling transmutation of pulp fiction images into a film which is unnervingly beautiful, intelligent, funny and serious. (Eddie Constantine, Anna Karina, Akim Tamiroff.)

**BATTLE OF THE BULGE (*Warner-Pathé*) Straightforward account of the Germans' last major offensive of the Second World War. Lasting three hours but never boring, thanks to strong narrative, splendid locations, fine staging of tank battles, minimal dose of messages and heroics. (Henry Fonda, Robert Ryan, Robert Shaw; director, Ken Annakin. Technicolor, Ultra Panavision presented in Cinerama.)

*BLINDFOLD (*Rank*) Society psychiatrist Rock Hudson gets mixed up with spies, phony government agents and a funny Italian family. Some sprightly chases and good lines, but Hitchcock does the spoof stuff rather better. (Claudia Cardinale, Guy Stockwell; director, Philip Dunne. Technicolor.)

*BLOOD AND BLACK LACE (*Gala*) Masked sadist disposes of the models in a fashion salon. A field day for Bava fans (menace, mist, a body in the bath, red filters everywhere); others will find the whole thing faintly ridiculous. (Eva Bartok, Cameron Mitchell. Technicolor.)

**BUNNY LAKE IS MISSING (*BLC/Columbia*) Four-year-old Bunny disappears from casually incompetent Hampstead nursery school—or does she? Compelling script and performances (Olivier, Martita Hunt, etc.) and thrusting direction by Otto Preminger. Gets a bit unhinged when it switches from crisp whodunnit to psychiatric shocker. (Carol Lynley, Keir Dullea. Panavision.) Reviewed.

CARRY ON COWBOY (*Warner-Pathé*) Sidney James as a ruthless desperado, "The Rumpo Kid", supported by the *Carry On* regulars in a Western send-up which turns out to be the usual mixture of outrageous puns and stock routines. (Kenneth Williams, Joan Sims, Jim Dale, Angela Douglas; director, Gerald Thomas. Eastman Colour.)

DOCTOR IN CLOVER (*Rank*) The Doctor mixture as before (blue jokes, rough slapstick), with Leslie Phillips as a Don Juan worrying about his age, and a tiresome comedy turn from Arthur Haynes as an obstreperous patient. (James Robertson Justice, Joan Sims, John Fraser; director, Ralph Thomas. In colour.)

****FISTS IN THE POCKET (*Connoisseur*) Quite extraordinary first film by a new director, ex-pupil of the Slade. The longings, frustrations and appalling deeds of a young epileptic, one of a family fated to abnormality, filmed with operatic brilliance and a tightrope walker's sense of balance. (Lou Castel, Paola Pitagora; director, Marco Bellocchio.)

**FLIGHT OF THE PHOENIX, THE (*Fox*) Long-winded but quite compelling account of survival in the desert. Good performances all round, and Aldrich's unpretentious direction makes it almost believable. (James Stewart, Richard Attenborough, Hardy Krüger, Peter Finch. DeLuxe Color.) Reviewed.

**FOUR IN THE MORNING (*Connoisseur*) Independent British feature with a rather schematically constructed three-stranded story, but beautifully acted by Judi Dench, Norman Rodway and Joe Melia as the *Look Back in Anger* trio from the central episode. (Ann Lynn, Brian Phelan; director, Anthony Simmons.)

GENTLE ART OF SEDUCTION, THE (*Miracle*) Gallic comedy about woman's pursuit of man, aimlessly scripted and over-played by a simpering cast. Madly sophisticated direction (speeded-up motion, etc.) by Edouard Molinaro. (Jean-Claude Brialy, Claude Rich, Jean-Paul Belmondo, Françoise Dorléac, Micheline Presle, Catherine Deneuve.)

*GIULIETTA DEGLI SPIRITI (*Miracle*) Giulietta Masina as the bourgeois wife assailed by fantasy figures from her past and subconscious, all decked out in Bri-Nylon draperies and ice-cream colour. Orgies, circuses, seances, faceless nuns; it rather depends on how habitable you find Fellini's private world. (Sandra Milo, Valentina Cortese, Valeska Gert. Technicolor.)

*GREAT RACE, THE (*Warner-Pathé*) New York to Paris motor race, with upright Tony Curtis and conniving Jack Lemmon locked in rivalry all the way. Slapstick exuberant; décor appealing; Lemmon magnificently moustachioed. But there's almost three hours of it. (Natalie Wood, Keenan Wynn; director, Blake Edwards. Technicolor, Super-Panavision.)

HOLIDAY IN SPAIN (*Cinerama*) Lethargic tour of famed Spanish beauty spots with some even more lethargic thriller plot thrown in. A lot of slow and mysterious sniffing by the hero reveals that this was once *Scent of Mystery*, the first (and last) film in Smellovision, now deodorised. (Denholm Elliott, Paul Lukas, Peter Lorre; director, Jack Cardiff. Technicolor; presented in Cinerama.)

**HOUSEHOLDER, THE (*Gala*) Lively but overlong Indian domestic comedy by the *Shakespeare Wallah* team, slightly Ray-like in its ironies plus some Western script influences. Introduces yet another startlingly beautiful Indian actress, Leela Naidu. (Shashi Kapoor, Durga Khote; director, James Ivory.) Reviewed.

JOY IN THE MORNING (*M-G-M*) Or, Anguish on the Campus. Yvette Mimieux and Richard Chamberlain's first year of married life at old Mission U. back in the Twenties. If it had been made by Frank Borzage and starred Margaret Sullivan and Henry Fonda, it might just have got by. (Arthur Kennedy, Oscar Homolka; director, Alex Segal. Metrocolor.)

JUDITH (*Paramount*) Sophia Loren, with gloss undiminished, as a Jewish concentration camp survivor hunting in Israel for the Nazi husband who once betrayed her and is now busily concocting wickednesses with the Arabs. *Incroyable*, as the French say. (Peter Finch, Jack Hawkins; director, Daniel Mann. Technicolor, Panavision.)

LIFE AT THE TOP (*BLC/Columbia*) Weak-kneed attempt to bring Joe Lampton and his world up to date with the new mood of the mid-Sixties. Doesn't miss a bilious trick—or a sentimental one, for that matter. (Laurence Harvey, Jean Simmons, Donald Wolfelt, Honor Blackman; director, Ted Kotcheff.)

*LOVED ONE, THE (*M-G-M*) Evelyn Waugh's graveyard satire jerkily updated to the space age, with much of the original point buried under weighty guest appearances and heavy-handed slapstick. Some nice lines and performances, though, from Rod Steiger and a husky-voiced Anjanette Comer. (John Gielgud, Robert Morse; director, Tony Richardson.) Reviewed.

MEN AND WOMEN (*Antony Balch*) Dismal Brazilian try at a really classy sex picture with lots of moody Antonioni trimmings. Despite erotic byplay (somewhat abridged in this version), the characters end up as bored as the audience. (Norma Benguel, Odeta Lara, Mario Benvenuti; director, Walter Hugo Khouri.)

*MY HOME IS COPACABANA (*Gala*) Arne Sucksdorff's film about wistful urchins struggling for existence on the hills above the rich beaches of Rio. Some telling observation here and there, in the old Sucksdorff manner, but the film could be more ingratiating if it tried less hard. (Leila Santos de Sousa, Cosme dos Santos.)

ONE SPY TOO MANY (*M-G-M*) Third in the "Man from UNCLE" series, with Solo and Kuryakin pitted against a megalomaniac (Rip Torn) with visions of being acclaimed as "Alexander the Greater." Same formula as before: colourful sets, off-beat dialogue—but it looks like becoming stereotyped. (Robert Vaughn, David McCallum, Dorothy Provine; director, Joseph Sargent. Metrocolor.)

*OTHELLO (*British Home Entertainments*) Straightforward record of the National Theatre production. Colour and sound quality variable, but the essence of the play comes over with genuine theatrical excitement and provides a fascinating close-up of Olivier's *tour de force* as the Moor. (Frank Finlay, Maggie Smith; director, Stuart Burge. Technicolor, Panavision.)

*OUR MAN FLINT (*Fox*) Engaging performance by James Coburn as the secret agent with so many girls and talents so varied that 007 might blush for shame. Sets extravagant and script inventive, but the direction is unfortunately neither. (Lee J. Cobb, Gila Golan; director, Daniel Mann. DeLuxe Color, CinemaScope.)

PAJAMA PARTY (*Warner-Pathé*) Early Corman-type pop effusion, a welter of Martians, motor-cyclists, con men and frenzied beach kids. Buster Keaton's poker-face provides a built-in critic's response. (Tommy Kirk, Annette Funicello, Elsa Lanchester; director, Don Weis. Pathécolor, Panavision.)

**PARIS VU PAR (*Amanda*) Six districts of Paris viewed by six directors. Actual sketches rather surprisingly on the conventional side, and done with varying effect. Unlike most episode films though, this one has a consistency which seems to come from not trying too hard. (Directors, Chabrol, Douchet, Godard, Pollet, Rohmer, Rouch. Ektachrome, Eastman Colour print.) Reviewed.

****PIERROT LE FOU (*Gala*) Godard's further adventures with a film which is "gay and sad at the same time"—a vision of black despair exploding in a brilliant burst of fireworks. Coutard's superb camerawork makes the Riviera a Garden of Eden in which love is menaced by gun-runners, murder and a woman's betrayal. (Anna Karina, Jean-Paul Belmondo. Eastman Colour, Techniscope.)

RASPUTIN—THE MAD MONK (*Warner-Pathé*) Christopher Lee in his best performance to date as the rogue monk wreaking havoc in the Czarist court. But Don Sharp's direction quite uninspired, with no attempt to capture the essence of the period or of the real Rasputin. (Barbara Shelley, Richard Pasco. Technicolor, CinemaScope.)

*REPTILE, THE (*Warner-Pathé*) Jacqueline Pearce as a reluctant and rather appealing cobra woman, sloughing her skin and hibernating between bouts of poisoning most of the inhabitants of a Cornish village. Fine, straight-faced costume horror with echoes of *Conan Doyle*, tidily directed by John Gilling. (Noel Willman, Ray Barrett, John Laurie. Technicolor.)

*SILENCERS, THE (*BLC/Columbia*) Our Man Flint—sorry, Our Man Helm—displays the urbanity now statutory in a world of outrageous gadgets, loose-living ladies, extravagant sets, and plots to take over the world. Dean Martin is splendid; so is the film, now and again. (Stella Stevens, Daliah Lavi, Victor Buono; director, Phil Karlson. Pathécolor, Panavision.)

SLENDER THREAD, THE (*Paramount*) Sidney Poitier holds suicidal Anne Bancroft on the "slender thread" of the telephone while police trace her call. Based on a real-life "Crisis Clinic", this badly written, would-be suspense drama might have made a thirty-minute television play. (Director, Sydney Pollack.)

***THOMAS L'IMPOSTEUR (*Amanda*) Franju's version of Cocteau's impressionist novel of the First World War. Brilliant evocation of period, and exactly captures the feeling of the novel. (Emmanuelle Riva, Fabrice Rouleau, Jean Servais.) Reviewed.

*THUNDERBALL (*United Artists*) Polished, precise, enjoyable and splendidly gadgeted James Bond adventure. The formula begins to pall a little, especially as Adolfo Celi makes a colourless villain, but the eerie underwater battles provide a face-lift. (Sean Connery, Claudine Auger, Luciana Paluzzi; director, Terence Young. Technicolor, Panavision.)

***VIVA MARIA (*United Artists*) Moreau and Bardot as the two revolutionary Marias, equally adept at inventing striptease or firing Edwardian machine-guns. One of those elaborately carefree extravaganzas which sounds terrible; actually gay, brightly plumed, full of engaging fancies and wayward charm. (George Hamilton, Paulette Goddard; director, Louis Malle. Eastman Colour, Panavision.) Reviewed.

**WAR GAME, THE (*B.F.I.*) After all the roaring, out comes rather a mouse of a film. At its best when actually attempting to simulate nuclear disaster, rather than in the TV man-in-the-street interviews and glimpses of stunned citizenry. It all comes across with undeniable impact—but, given the theme, how could it not? (Director, Peter Watkins.) Reviewed.

WHERE THE SPIES ARE (*M-G-M*) Occasionally engaging spy film about a British country doctor (David Niven) bribed by the Secret Service into battle against Russian agents in Rome and Beirut. Dialogue sparkles intermittently; direction heavy-handed. (Françoise Dorléac, Nigel Davenport, Ronald Radd; director, Val Guest. Metrocolor, Panavision.)

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